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EDITORIAL

JUSTICE, FAREWELL

The nation has suffered a tremendous loss in Justice William J. Brennan's resignation. Brennan often supplied the key vote, the innovative legal analyses and also the passionate engagement and moral imagination that led to significant changes in our conceptualization of the Constitution and the role of the Supreme Court as its primary enforcer. Of twentieth-century justices, he can be compared in jurisprudential importance to Holmes, Brandeis and Black.

Justice Brennan would be missed even in a liberal Court; and of course the Court, with its Reagan appointees, has become markedly less liberal over the past decade. Still, although many of Brennan's most recent opinions have been eloquent dissents, especially on the death penalty, just this past term he was able to write important majority opinions (in 5-to-4 cases) upholding affirmative action and striking down Congress's ill-considered attempt to criminalize flag burning. He also provided the all-important fifth vote keeping *Roe v. Wade* alive as a protector of a woman's right to an abortion.

Now President Bush has nominated David Souter, a 50-year-old federal appeals court judge, to replace Justice Brennan. Aside from his Harvard/Rhodes pedigree, the principal qualification of this conservative jurist seems to be that he has written no opinions, books or articles nor made any speeches on the great and controversial issues expected to come before the Court.

It is the United States Senate, with its constitutionally ordained power to "advise and consent," that will evaluate Souter. Senators should start by rereading many of Justice Brennan's opinions. His support, defense and protection of the vulnerable are the best standard against which to measure his potential successor, and provide the best text for the tough questions that ought to be put to the nominee.

COLOR BLINDERS
Julian Bond

FATHERS AND SONS
Alexander Cockburn

HERR KOHL'S NEW EUROPE
Daniel Singer

PINOCHET'S VICTIMS IN CHILE
Claudia Dreifus

TRAHISON DES MARXISTES
Jane Caplan

TIME FOR A CHANGE
Michael Waldman

OUR MISSION REMAINS

BREAK UP THE BLOCS IN EUROPE

E.P. THOMPSON

This has been a good year for peace in Europe, but not such a good year for the European peace movement. No doubt these things go together. The much-trumpeted "end of the cold war" has inevitably slackened the motivations to act urgently for peace. Exhausted activists have been picking up other themes in politics or in their personal lives. Indeed, people have told me there isn't such a thing as a peace movement anymore, a movement standing apart from and sometimes influencing profoundly other political agendas. But that is an overstatement.

Organizations and experienced offices abound in Europe (like C.N.D. and Quaker Peace and Service in Britain), and they are very much more influential than they were ten years ago. These are still at the center of significant activist lobbies. The recent Ninth Annual European Nuclear Disarmament (END) Convention in Helsinki, Finland, and Tallinn, Estonia, demonstrated how the wide spectrum of nonaligned peace forces can still meet together in an effective alliance—the Greens, Eurocommunists and Social Democrats, the feminist and Christian movements of the West, with many allies from the Third World and increasing numbers of (sometimes hesitant) allies from Eastern and Central Europe.

The European peace movement certainly still exists: as consolidated infrastructure, as known and trusted network, as wide and loose alliance, as mood and aspiration, and also as experience; that is, tens of thousands know whom they trust and whom

(*Continued on Page 166*)

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EXCHANGE.

COVERT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Provincetown, Mass.

I trust William O'Rourke means well ["Protesting N.E.A.," June 25], but his response to the critics of government funding of the arts (I'll stoop to their dishonest tactics and protect myself) is shortsighted and counterproductive. O'Rourke thinks because he hasn't suffered frostbite that the restrictive language proposed hasn't sent the political temperature plummeting. He implies that by taking the money and continuing to write as he always has, he will be engaging in some clever form of civil disobedience. But civil disobedience has a tradition of *overt* action. A covert challenge—a "we'll see what happens if they notice me" stance—is worse than meaningless.

O'Rourke is right about recent judicial actions and the "drug oath," but he is wrong about almost everything else. He is wrong when he thinks that photographs are the easiest prey. Since the attacks on the Mapplethorpe exhibit, we have seen an escalation of attacks on other disciplines—theater, film, music, dance, performance art and literature. He is wrong when he presumes that the artistic value conferred by a grant will preclude attack—or even prosecution—on obscenity grounds, as the citizens of Cincinnati have learned. He is wrong when he thinks peer review—indeed a fine system—alone will protect artists. Helms & Co. are objecting precisely to grants that went through that process. He is wrong when he dismisses all "arts bureaucrats" as p.r. hucksters and shills. They have brought to public attention serious work that, by virtue of the beliefs (or the sex or ethnic background) of the artist or the content of the work, is outside the "market loop."

He is wrong when he tries to convince us that the language in question does not constitute some sort of loyalty oath. What else could a vow not to violate "community standards" be? He is wrong when he thinks Helms & Co. want *him* to return his money. They want the Minnie Bruce Pratts, the Karen Finleys, the Lesbian & Gay Film Festivals, and all others whose work challenges their beliefs to return the money—as well as to have none of their likes even eligible for funding ever again. I don't want Pratt or any of those whose work challenges their beliefs—or mine—to return their grants. But I do wish that most of the other recipients would. It is only when those who are *unlikely* to offend—the Papps, the Zimmers and, yes, the O'Rourkes—refuse to be a party to a system that discriminates and censors that the censors *might* be held at bay.

I welcome all the various forms of protest in which both artists and arts administrators currently are participating. Some of us who worked at the N.E.A. during the transition from the Carter to the Reagan Administration are well aware that the problem is not new. Those of us who had Congressional aides combing our files looking for "dirty words" know that the attackers are serious—just as, I presume, those who witnessed the way Steve Goodwin, a literature program director, naïvely facilitated the attacks (in the name of compromise) by calling attention to several literature program fellowships he thought might be considered objectionable, are all too acutely aware of how easily self-censorship occurs. I rue that the O'Rourke-style liberals, and even alleged "progressives," leap so readily at antidemocratic measures in the name of compromise. Better an arts endowment exist and fund some, they are saying, than no arts endowment at all.

There was a time when I might have agreed. Not so now: The stakes are too great. When we capitulate to measures that deepen the economic, social and cultural chasms that already exist in this nation, we do ourselves and our politics a great disservice. Better to have no arts funded than only bland, state-sanctioned works.

And consider who gives the greatest share of their income to the arts: not the rich, as one might suppose, but the poor and the political. So let the antidemocratic forces dismantle the National Endowment for the Arts if they will. They may suffer greater losses than those of us who struggle for equality—as the leap to financial support of those who have had the courage to turn down their grants (the "big" Papps and the "little" *Iowa Reviews* alike) indicates. And, once the fundamentalists have succeeded in dismantling the N.E.A., let's use their own arguments to dismantle the Pentagon.

Mary L. MacArthur
(Former assistant director of the N.E.A. literature program)

O'ROURKE REPLIES

Bennington, Vt.

I am amused to be told that my book on the Harrisburg 7 and my novels *The Meekness of Isaac*, *Idle Hands* and *Criminal Tendencies* are not works that "challenge" Helms & Co.'s "beliefs." Is MacArthur always given to characterizing the work of writers she gives no evidence of ever having read? What is this to come to? Dueling F.O.I.A. files to see whose neck has been stuck out farthest? On the covert/overt question: I was not the first to rush onto the brightly lit stage. It is not surprising that Joseph Papp would be—his hands are accustomed to gripping the levers of media attention. But those who have turned down the grants, until John Frohnmayer's recent rejection of four of eighteen peer-panel-approved performance grants, have been producers, presses, universities and choreographers. If MacArthur can't acknowledge a labor/management issue in this controversy, it is likely beyond my powers to enlighten her. What I was rather quick to challenge publicly was the tactics, the line artists were being told to toe. What is MacArthur's definition of "overt"? I am protesting, if MacArthur hasn't noticed.

MacArthur seems determined deliberately to misread. I didn't write—nor do I think—that "artistic value" will "preclude" attack. Just the opposite. Artists are attacked all the time (as well as some museum directors) and they stand their ground. Regarding the "loyalty oath," MacArthur not only continues to distort language, she ignores it and invents what suits her. The phrase "community standards" is nowhere to be found in the so-called obscenity restriction I quoted. I do not dismiss all "arts bureaucrats" and I did not use the words "hucksters and shills." Because MacArthur disagrees with me is she rendered illiterate? What kind of public discourse is this? I don't say, "Better an arts endowment exist and fund some . . .", etc. I don't imply what she implies for me. Of course I think "the political temperature" has plummeted. Photographs *are* the easiest prey; films at least move, presenting problems for the virtue vultures—photographs obviously are not the only prey. Her denigrating interpretation ("I'll stoop . . .") of what I've written is absurd. All ninety-seven creative writing fellows accepted their grants. I am speaking out for them and hundreds of other writers, painters, playwrights, dancers, etc. And as MacArthur so shakily demonstrates, my position at the moment is not popular. I applaud arts administrators who protest, even past federal government employees of the more-radical-than-thou sort; it's their job. But I differ on the nature of the protest.

Frohnmayer's rejection of four of the eighteen approved performance grants shows the strategic error in Papp's and MacArthur's sort of protest. Papp should have made a stink about the "restriction," but I would have had him then say, since his peers awarded him the grant, he would validate their decision and accept the money. Frohnmayer would then have been put on notice as to where the line was drawn. But Papp thumbed his nose at the peer-review process. MacArthur's faint praise of the peer review reveals her instinctive allegiance: to the business people of the arts. Peer review, at least after the earliest procedures were revamped, was and is the protective moat between individual artists and the government. Frohnmayer's recent action has crippled (perhaps doomed) the N.E.A., but Papp's protest, aimed at the N.E.A., not Helms and the Congress, apparently further baffled the already unsophisticated Frohnmayer.

Who will swallow that MacArthur and those who agree with her are alone those "who struggle for equality"? And that the demise of the N.E.A. will lead us to "dismantle the Pentagon"? MacArthur's perspective emerges from cloud-cuckooland.

William O'Rourke

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EDITORIALS.

Khmer Ruse

After Peter Jennings's ABC News special on Cambodia in April, there was a two-hour panel discussion during which Stephen Solarz, the Democrats' Mr. Cambodia, demanded proof of who was responsible for diverting to the Khmer Rouge aid intended for the non-Communist resistance. Give me names, the Congressman cried, I'll call hearings! As the documentary made clear, the U.S. role in reviving Pol Pot's army goes much deeper than the activities of some rogue operative handing out M-16s behind the Bangkok embassy. The program probably helped make a shift in policy inevitable, and the change came July 18, when the State Department withdrew recognition from the coalition dominated by Pol Pot and announced that it would move toward direct talks with Vietnam.

Motives: Dubious. The policy was altered only because of the rapid advances of the Khmer Rouge since Vietnamese troops pulled out last September. That led to growing diplomatic pressure on the Administration and to cold feet in Congress. Simultaneously, all the old rationales for U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia vanished. The Chinese are cos-

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seted allies, the Vietnamese are out, and the Soviet Union has lost interest. Yet there is still bipartisan agreement that the Hun Sen government in Phnom Penh is a "Vietnamese puppet regime"; right-wing fantasies of P.O.W.s alive in the jungles remain a powerful brake on any sensible policy; and in the same week as the change in Cambodia policy was announced, the United States christened a new warship the Hue City. One day, Vietnam may again become a country; for now it remains a war, and a state of mind.

Timing: Too little, too late. Washington now favors U.N.-sponsored elections, but at this stage these could work to Pol Pot's advantage. If U.S. policy had changed last September, when its final condition was met, this would have left Hun Sen in a much stronger position and deprived the Khmer Rouge of ten months of steady progress. The C.I.A. now reckons that Pol Pot's forces enjoy as much as 30 percent support inside Cambodia. It's not too cynical to see the new policy as a kind of moral escape clause for the United States in the event that Pol Pot returns to power.

Heroes: None.

Villains: Numerous—and no need to go back as far as Nixon and his half-million tons of secret bombs. By 1979 the Khmer Rouge was decimated; it was then remade because of the U.S.-Chinese fixation with punishing Vietnam. Countless bureaucrats are guilty, but none more than Zbigniew Brzezinski, who first gave China the go-ahead to arm the Khmer Rouge. And then there is Solarz. His particular contribution has been to argue, since 1985, for U.S. aid to the non-Communist resistance, saying this would enhance its bargaining position. A child could have predicted that the only beneficiary of prolonged fighting would be the Khmer Rouge.

Silver Linings: Few. Bush's men are pragmatic enough to move when backed against a wall, even if the wall is of their own making. But if the Vietnam War can now finally be ended, it is less from moral enlightenment than from the fear of being held responsible for Killing Fields II.

Color Blinders

Should racial minorities and women have the same legal rights—and remedies—as old white men? Supporters of the Civil Rights Act of 1990 say yes. Its opponents, mostly old white men, say no.

Lining up behind the legislation, intended to overturn five 1989 Supreme Court decisions that weakened civil rights protections, is a broad range of civil rights groups. In opposition, besides the usual bigots and neo-Bourbons, is the Bush Administration, led by its biggest quota-baiter, Attorney General Dick Thornburgh.

White House civil rights strategy since the early days of the Reagan Administration has been to associate any progressive measure affecting blacks with hated quotas; the kinder, gentler Bush is carrying on the tradition. The new bill would strengthen guarantees against discrimination in employment and, by restoring a "business necessity" rule that had been in effect from 1971 to 1989, would make it easier for victims to prove discrimination. Opponents of the bill argue that if plaintiffs can invoke statistical disparities, thus forcing companies to prove that such disparities result from a business necessity, then employers will impose quotas on themselves as a pre-emptive measure. Unable to find qualified women or minorities, these businesses apparently would just hire incompetents.

But "business necessity" is a standard developed not by quota-loving Kennedyites but by former Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger, a Nixon appointee who wrote in *Griggs v. Duke Power Company* in 1971 that it was the "touchstone" for determining the validity of employment practices that result in a work force that does not reflect the makeup of the available labor pool. Senate Republicans said the 1990 bill would be a "litigation bonanza" because of the "necessity" rule, but couldn't explain how it had been in effect for eighteen years without that result. Likewise, Thornburgh was unable to tell a *Washington Post* reporter how restoring the rule would create quotas in the future when none had been created in the past.

When Edward Kennedy, the bill's chief Senate sponsor, offered compromise language prohibiting quotas, White House Chief of Staff John Sununu said no. Such language was nevertheless included in the bill that passed on July 18 by 65 to 34, two votes less than required to overturn a veto, which President Bush continues to threaten.

So far, Bush has had it both ways—for civil rights and against quotas. But the bill the House is now considering takes both positions into account, and Bush may have painted himself into a corner by condemning the legislation as a "quota bill."

The opposition also includes many major American corporations, such as A.T.&T., Bank of America, Dow Chemical, Exxon, I.B.M., K Mart and Texaco. Their opposition stems largely from the fact that the bill would, for the first time, allow damages to successful plaintiffs under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This would give Latinos, blacks and women equal footing in discrimination suits with that of white men over 40.

Under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 plaintiffs who prove age discrimination have been able to collect punitive damages. At best, a plaintiff who proves sexual or racial bias in the workplace under Title VII can get no more than two years' back pay. Now, a majority of discrimination complaints before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission charge age bias, and 83 percent of claims under the age discrimination act are filed by white men. A study by the Syracuse University School of Management found that the act primarily protects white male executives in their late 50s who have lost their jobs.

All but two of America's 100 senators are white men; the average age in the Senate is 55.6. Twenty-four of the 435 Representatives are black; twenty-eight are women; twelve are Latinos. The average age in the House is 51.3. A Congress dominated by older white men—the average ages were even higher when the age discrimination act was passed—extended maximum protections to people like themselves and the people they would become. The 1990 Civil Rights

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Act would finally give women and minorities damages if they prove willful discrimination.

Earlier this year the Disabilities Act breezed through Congress as member after member rose to tell colleagues of a sightless brother or a cousin in a wheelchair or other disabled relatives whose rights would be protected by the law. No member of Congress claimed kinship to old white men when the age discrimination act passed with punitive damages included; none had to.

Sadly, few in the Bush Administration or corporate America have black relatives, and apparently few have any female relatives—sisters, daughters, wives or mothers—whose rights need the same protection as aged, and aging, white men.

JULIAN BOND

Julian Bond is a civil rights activist who will join the faculty of the University of Virginia in the fall.

Ollie Outs In Free

The appellate court panel's split decision (the determining votes from two Reagan appointees) suspending Oliver North's convictions on Iran/*contra* charges is a triumph of farce over felony. It adds another undistinguished chapter to the shameful history of government actions—executive, legislative and judicial—to contain the damage from the scandal and obscure its central meaning.

When the Iran/*contra* affair was first officially announced, in November 1986, there was much handwringing, even on the part of staunch Administration defenders, and there were demands that "the truth" be sought out so that such obvious violations of law and policy as seemed to be surfacing could be kept from happening again. Two and a half years later the facts of the scandal are much clearer, but "the truth" remains too uncomfortable for any of the government's branches to recognize. Absent an implausible reversal by the full Court of Appeals, the denouement of the North story seems likely to prove to be another anticlimax in the saga.

Ironies abound in this latest development. Everyone who watched, listened to or read North's testimony at the Iran/*contra* Congressional hearings knows that he admitted doing what he was later convicted of doing (and most of what he was acquitted of doing): accepting an illegal gratuity, falsifying and destroying documents, aiding and abetting the obstruction of Congress. That's irony number one. Number two: What the Court of Appeals now deems to be a flawed trial was fatally inadequate to begin with. The "independent" counsel was prevented from bringing major charges of theft and conspiracy against North and others because of the Reagan-Bush Administration's insistence that national security would be compromised by public disclosure of the evidence necessary to prosecute such charges.

North is now likely to escape the minor punishments to which he was sentenced—probation, community service and a fine that amounts to his fee for six nights on the lecture circuit—because, the court is saying, it was impossible for him to tell one set of truths to the nation on television, under a grant of immunity, and not have those truths come back to haunt him. Again ironically, it was this very prospect that caused his prosecutors to take unprecedented measures to avoid using, or knowing about, what North told Congress. And Judge Gerhard Gesell also took unprecedented caution in selecting a jury which—a final irony—having entered the case with no knowledge of North and little of the scandal, is now deemed to have been tainted by his instructions.

The court says Gesell erred on the key issue of North's authorization and intent; that the judge improperly instructed the jury to ignore "the defendant's beliefs" in doing what he did. But anyone who attended the trial realizes that North's beliefs, in the anticommunist crusade of the Reagan White House, were hammered into the record by his skillful attorney, Brendan Sullivan. The prosecutors, on the other hand, chose to present North as a common criminal, driven into wrongdoing by his zealous energies. Sullivan's strategy worked: Sympathy for North's plight as a "pawn in a chess game played by giants" won him acquittal on nine of twelve felony charges. The Court of Appeals retroactively extends the jury's sympathies further. This outcome was prefigured in North's performance before Congress, where the gamble of bargaining for immunity was lost by the committees' cowardice in not pursuing the scandal to the top.

Throughout official government inquiries and legal proceedings, from the Tower commission onward, there has been much pious rhetoric concerning the implications of the Iran/*contra* scandal for the future. North's apparent escape from the legal system, through the sorcery of the appeals court, tends to reduce the affair to a series of wordy footnotes, frightening to no one who might contemplate similar adventures in the future.

The inhibitory effect on Congressional hearings and judicial prosecutions concerning government malfeasance will be strengthened if this precedent holds. One can imagine the glee of other taxpayer-subsidized malefactors (HUD officials, S&L executives) who will now line up to tell Congress their immunized tales of wrongdoing. If, like Oliver North, they talk loudly enough in one room, they'll never have to fear the consequences of their whispers in another.

LARRY BENSKY

*Larry Bensky covered the Iran/*contra *hearings and the trial of Oliver North for Pacifica Radio.*

★

GERMAN REUNIFICATION: THE DOWNSIDE

Here's the fate that could befall us:
Deutschland, Deutschland, Über Alles.

Calvin Trillin

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Fathers and Sons

I'd just been reading an interview with Justice Brennan in *Irish America* when news came that he was hanging up his robes. Brennan's reminiscences are laced with a sense of history, a sympathy for the travails of ordinary humans. The younger crowd on the Court doesn't look as if it spends much time thinking about how life looks from the bottom of the barrel.

Brennan described how his father, an Irish immigrant, got a job shoveling coal at Ballantine's brewery in Newark. He soon found that conditions were very bad for the workers there, so "he started organizing within Ballantine's and then spread around to the other breweries around the city. Remember, there were no trade laws to help you in those days. You just had to fight your way through."

Brennan's father did well enough in this strike that he began to rise in the ranks of organized labor around Newark. Then came a statewide trolley strike, eventually broken because the police moved at the behest of the McCarter family who, as Brennan recalls, "really ran the state." In an effort to head off a more sweeping onslaught on their power the city bigwigs named Brennan's father a police commissioner, but "he promptly showed where he stood in the labor disputes and then that led to one fight after another." In the end he and his comrades "swept away the whole government," and he wound up running the Department of Public Safety. This paradigm, that justice exists to serve everyone, has stuck with Brennan all his life.

Brennan, Marshall and Blackmun all turned 21 around the time of the stock market crash of 1929 and spent their early professional years watching the Depression gnaw through the country. Marshall's father, William, the grandson of a slave, was a yacht club steward. Blackmun's father ran a grocery and hardware store in St. Paul. His son has recalled that they lived in a blue-collar neighborhood and "because I grew up in poor surroundings, I know there's another world out there that we sometimes forget about." (Goldberg and Fortas, two liberal Justices who left the Court, were also in this age bracket. Goldberg, one of eleven children, was the son of a Russian Jewish immigrant who sold vegetables from the back of a wagon. Fortas was an English cabinetmaker's son.)

The next cohort of Justices are White, Stevens and Rehnquist, born respectively in 1917, 1920 and 1924. White, a law-and-order judge, had a dad in the notoriously antiunion lumber business. Alpha White also served as Mayor of Wellington, Colorado. Stevens, somewhat of a liberal individualist, was the son of a wealthy businessman in Chicago. Chief Justice Rehnquist spent his childhood in a well-to-do suburb of Milwaukee (which had a socialist mayor in the 1930s). His father was a wholesale paper salesman who never attended college. His mother had a bachelor's degree and together with her husband instilled in the children reverence for the views of Alf Landon and Herbert Hoover.

Reagan's appointees—O'Connor, Scalia and Kennedy—all came of age in the swell of the Eisenhower fifties, when the tide still purported to lift all boats. O'Connor's father was a rancher in the Southwest. (The head on this item is intended to evoke Turgenev's great novel, though properly, as I'm sure many are eager to point out, it should be Fathers and Sons and Daughter.) Scalia's father, Eugene, was a professor of romance languages who had immigrated from Italy, and Kennedy's old man was a Catholic Republican lawyer and lobbyist well known in Sacramento.

Souter? He reached maturity in the year that Nixon lost to Kennedy, and his father was a banker. The family moved from Massachusetts to Republican New Hampshire. For liberals it doesn't look good, unless Souter despised his father as a Nixon man and, if confirmed, will spend the next half-century getting his own back. He seems profoundly repressed and, who knows, could explode into judicial activism. In my view the great loss to the Court was Douglas Ginsburg, that child of the sixties who left college to run a dating service and smoked at least one joint at Harvard. His father, Maurice, was a mortgage financier, which always gives one insight into the human condition.

Guiltlessly Guilty

On Friday, June 29, *The New York Times* ran a photograph with its lead editorial: a jubilant *contra* bathed in the smiles of Obando y Bravo and Violeta Chamorro. The headline announced, "The Contra War, 1981–1990." Two weeks later *contras* were battling Sandinista strikers.

The editorial said Washington had been "ensnared in horrors like assassination manuals, the clandestine mining of Nicaraguan harbors and the still-reverberating Iran-contra scandal." This is like some old Nazi editorialist on Goebbels's *Das Reich* saying that Germany was "ensnared" in World War II and accompanying war crimes.

Guilt is not part of the imperial character profile. *Moscow News* for June 3 had a pleasant interview with William Colby, who was in Moscow at a press seminar organized by New York University's Center for War, Peace and the News Media, a dreadful gaggle of self-seekers. In its introduction to the interview, conducted by Andrei Bezruchenko and Wendy Sloane, *Moscow News* says of Colby that "his tenure with the CIA was marked by tension over Vietnam." The questioning is equally fiery:

> MN: Were there times when you felt any personal conflict between what the government told you to do and what you wanted to do?
> Colby: No, I could work it out.

At least he didn't say he was "ensnared" into running the Phoenix program, by which at least 20,000 Vietnamese were assassinated.

> MN: So the Vietnam war as an idea was correct?
> Colby: Yeah. We did it wrong, we did it wrong. I think we should have been supporting the people in the villages against the so-called people's war and we really insisted on fighting a soldier's war.

If I had a rocket launcher . . .

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Fathers and Guardians

In the same year, 1948, that the young Colby was helping his boss, C.I.A. founder William Donovan, protect the murderers of CBS reporter George Polk, three left journalists, Cedric Belfrage, James Aronson and John T. McManus, were founding the *National Guardian.* Belfrage and Aronson had met in Germany, where they were trying to carry out Eisenhower's orders to set up a post-Nazi German press with people who had resisted fascism. Of course such resisters included German Communists.

Since the actual purpose of postwar U.S. policy, set by George Kennan and other such heroes of *Moscow News* and the N.Y.U. center, was to make sure that West Germany was not de-Nazified in any meaningful sense of the word, Belfrage and Aronson's efforts later counted against them, as did the existence of the *National Guardian*, which along with *Monthly Review* (begun in 1949) was a lonely voice in those days. At the high crest of McCarthyism, Belfrage, a British citizen, was deported. He eventually settled in Cuernavaca, where he died on June 21 at the age of 85.

I never had the good fortune to meet him. To a fundraiser for *The Guardian* in San Francisco in 1988 at which I was a speaker, he sent this message: "Your celebration means a lot to me as the first editor of *The Guardian*. I was particularly glad to hear from John [Trinkl] that your speaker tonight is Alexander Cockburn . . . because he is the son of my old friend Claud, who can also take some credit for tonight's affair. For in the early Hitler years before World War II, when I was a respectably non-political movie critic in London, I was one of many journalists and others influenced toward the left by Claud. I truly believe that had I not got to know Claud at that time, the Guardian might never have been launched—at least not by me as one of the founding trio."

Something else to blame the old dad for. In Britain, which remains obsessed with spies to the exclusion of all else, there is a vigorous industry of parahistorians trying to prove that Comrade C was the Comintern "control" for Roger Hollis, head of British counterintelligence. Peter Wright's book, *Spycatcher*, is mostly about the efforts of a particularly crazed faction inside the British security establishment to prove Hollis's treachery.

Wright thought it enough to point out that Hollis and Cockburn had attended Oxford at about the same time in the early 1920s, as if that were conclusive evidence of some later partnership in remitting secrets to Moscow. Another of Wright's suspects, also at Oxford in the early 1920s, was Maurice Richardson, a longtime TV critic for *The Observer.* A great comic writer. I still steal his jokes occasionally. Someone here should reissue his *Exploits of Engelbrecht the Dwarf*, a masterpiece of the comic surreal. One of the stories has Earth fielding its all-star team in a rugby game against Mars. Marx is at scrum half, shouting "Heel you *Teufels*, heel in the name of History!"

So at the age of 19 or so Richardson and Cockburn were supposedly already carrying forward Moscow's fell program. When the stuff about Hollis began to come up publicly in 1981, shortly before my father died, he tried to explain to excited journalists phoning Ardmore from London that, unlike his schoolfriend Graham Greene, who had joined the party briefly at some amazingly young age, at Oxford he himself was still of soundly conventional views and was, indeed to his shame, on the wrong side of the barricades in the Great Strike of 1926. He did know Hollis's brother Chris very well, but not Roger, who came up to Oxford three years after him—an immense gulf given the rigid cohorts of that time.

None of this did him much good, since in these matters crazed spy-hunters merely say that scabbing in 1926 was "cover," thus confirming their suspicions. But if indeed my father was Roger Hollis's "contact" in the postwar period the men in Moscow chose a complicated way of getting in touch with their supposed creature Hollis. We lived in rural Ireland without a phone and he would have had to receive and relay Moscow's commands from the call box of one of the pubs in town where, as always in Ireland, people are under close surveillance. There was a Catholic zealot who used to drink in The Nook, at the bottom of Church Street in Youghal, who believed that my father and Willie French, the sexton at the Protestant church up the hill, were adepts in Freemasonry and used The Nook to advance conspiracy. One time he saw Willie slip a paper into my father's overcoat pocket and promptly called the Gardai, who came and said that maybe things would quiet down if my father showed what exactly it was that Willie had given him. My father dragged out the paper from his pocket, a bit awkwardly because Willie was not only the sexton but the local process server, and the imagined agenda of Freemasonry was actually a writ to appear in court for nonpayment of bills.

I gather that now the same gang boosting the Cockburn-Hollis connection are saying that Belfrage was similarly Moscow's pawn in espionage. Since the man is dead it's easy to say it. In my father's case, when the war was over he left the *Daily Worker* without undue fuss and headed to Ireland to begin a new phase of his life writing fiction. Stalin was busy shooting his close friends like Mikhail Koltzov, and another buddy, Otto Katz, was hanged in Prague, saying before his death that he had been led into the path of counterrevolution by Colonel Claud Cockburn of the M.I.5. My father said he reckoned Katz had been asked to denounce someone and thought that Claud was unlikely to suffer painful consequences if Katz gave his name to the executioners.

When Belfrage was battling deportation he addressed a rally in the following terms:

> Let us not be blind to the fact that the majority of Americans are under the spell of a few men who rule their destinies and mold their minds—and these rulers and molders can only be properly described as know-nothings who make glory out of knowing nothing, because to know is to shatter the entire edifice of fraud that has been built up.

Belfrage tried to let people know. These days I think that mostly they do know. They know it's all an edifice of fraud and are just awaiting some good ideas on what to do about it.

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN

■ A Nod's as Good as a Wink

"We want to emphasize once again in the strongest possible terms that the CIA neither engages in nor condones drug trafficking." Joseph DeTrani, director of public affairs for the C.I.A., was compelled to release that statement after recent developments in the Los Angeles trial of four men accused of involvement in the 1985 murder of drug agent Enrique Camarena.

Defense lawyers forced the U.S. government to hand over Drug Enforcement Administration reports regarding Lawrence Victor Harrison, a witness who worked for major Mexican drug traffickers. Harrison had told the D.E.A. he had heard that in the early 1980s guerrillas—presumably *contras*—were trained at a ranch in Mexico owned by drug lord Rafael Caro Quintero, now imprisoned in Mexico for participating in the Camarena murder. Harrison further said the camp was watched over by Mexico's corrupt and powerful Federal Security Directorate and sponsored by the C.I.A.

Harrison's information is secondhand and he's not a model citizen, so DeTrani can get away with denying that the agency used Mexico as a training site for *contras* and colluded with drug traffickers there. But the general thrust of his denial—that the C.I.A. would not involve itself with drug smugglers—is contradicted by the public record. Leaving aside the well-hashed Noriega connection, let's review some old evidence.

In February 1986, Robert Owen, Oliver North's courier to the *contras*, wrote North: "No doubt you know the DC-4 Foley got was used at one time to run drugs, and part of the crew had criminal records. Nice group the Boys choose." Owen later testified that he was referring to a plane used to fly supplies to the *contras*, that Foley was someone with "connections with a government agency" and that "the Boys" meant the C.I.A.

During hearings conducted by Senator John Kerry in 1988, former C.I.A.-assisted *contras* testified that they had a symbiotic relationship with traffickers. Karol Prado said the rebels in the Southern Front provided fuel to drug-ferrying pilots who used *contra* airstrips. Octaviano César maintained that C.I.A. and U.S. military officials told him it was O.K. to accept assistance from a known drug trafficker "as long as we don't deal with the powder."

Then there's the testimony of the C.I.A.'s own Joseph Fernandez, who served as chief of station in Costa Rica and worked on the *contra* program. He told the Iran/*contra* committees that Company policy was to stay away from drug-tainted individuals. But, he added, there was "one exception to that, and that was a matter of higher authority over me." In that instance the "higher authority" ordered Fernandez to keep working with persons who he believed were involved in the drug trade.

DeTrani's statement could well be truthful, in a crafty fashion. C.I.A. officials probably don't engage in drug dealing themselves. But the evidence clearly suggests some have an uncommon ability to work or, at the least, coexist with drugrunners—in pursuit, of course, of larger interests.

■ In for a Penny, in for a Billion

The Air Force recently engaged in some fancy rhetorical footwork of its own. In response to a report from the Union of Concerned Scientists criticizing the B-2 Stealth bomber for having "no compelling mission" and being "unaffordable," the Air Force fired back a rebuttal, which it sent to every member of Congress. The Air Force's argument—and the fact that it responded—signal its desperation:

> Certainly it is not hard to understand why some deem the B-2 as unaffordable because its cost is high and easily measured. The best way to think about cost, however, is to focus on what we can affect from today forward.

Why is that the best? Because more than one-half of the $62 billion total estimated cost of the B-2 program has already been "invested." If B-2 production funds are eliminated after 1990 the Air Force will be left, after an "investment" of $35.4 billion, with a measly fifteen aircraft, sixty short of what current plans call for—"almost no combat capability." The next sixty, the Air Force notes, will cost only $25.7 billion (that is, if there are no cost overruns). Don't cry over spilled billions, the service suggests. At less than $500 million a bird, the B-2 program is now a steal, and no longer the most expensive weapons program.

■ Good Point—Now Turn Over All Your Records

In May the National Agenda for Peace in El Salvador, a Washington-based group of U.S. activists and church groups, ran an ad in *The Washington Post* calling for a suspension of aid to El Salvador. Sixty-eight prominent Americans signed the ad, including eighteen Episcopal, Lutheran and Catholic bishops, Coretta Scott King and former New Mexico Governor Toney Anaya. A month later, the group heard back from the Bush Administration, via a letter from the Justice Department's criminal division. The letter stated that the ad "indicates that you are engaged in publicity activities on behalf of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front," the Marxist guerrillas, and therefore the group might have to register as a foreign agent. The letter asked that National Agenda provide the Justice Department with information on its activities and declare whether it is "directed, controlled, financed or subsidized" by a foreign entity. The apparent reasoning underlying the letter: Americans who oppose the Administration must be fronting for a foreign group. National Agenda says it has no financial or organizational ties with the F.M.L.N., and the Justice Department doesn't suggest it possesses evidence to the contrary. The American Civil Liberties Union, which believes the government's action is unprecedented, has asked the department to rescind its request, arguing that demanding such information in response to an act of political speech violates the First Amendment. A Justice Department spokesperson said the request was "fairly routine."

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WATCHING RIGHTS.

ARYEH NEIER

It would have been better if Nelson Mandela had not stopped in Nairobi on his way back from the United States. Unfortunately he did and, at a rally on July 13 in the stadium named for Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi, Mandela declared, "What right has the West, what right have the whites anywhere, to teach us about democracy when they executed those who asked for democracy during the time of the colonial era?"

No doubt this provided comfort to Moi, who blames Western governments for trying to impose their system on his East African country. Yet Mandela's comment was at least ill-informed about what is going on in Kenya. There blacks have been demanding democracy and human rights. In reprisal, former Cabinet members, lawyers and journalists have been rounded up and, if past experience is a guide, they have been mistreated and even tortured in detention. This sparked demonstrations and street fighting in Nairobi and other cities and, by the time Mandela spoke, more than 1,000 arrests and twenty-eight deaths had been reported. The poor attendance at the rally for Mandela—20,000 people in a stadium that holds 60,000, with many of them schoolchildren and others required to be present—reflected either fear of further rioting or popular refusal to lend even the slightest support to Moi.

Moi has been President of Kenya since the death of Jomo Kenyatta, in 1978. His twelve years have been marked by the steady restriction of liberties. In 1982 opposition parties were banned; subsequently periodicals were shut down, the judiciary lost its independence, parliamentary authority was whittled away and the electoral process was reduced to farce. Moi has concentrated power, and much of the nation's wealth, in his own hands.

In the forefront of the struggle for human rights and the rule of law has been a group of lawyers who were among the targets of the recent crackdown. Those taken into custody include Gitobu Imanyara, the editor of the most outspoken surviving periodical in Kenya, *The Nairobi Law Monthly*; Mohamed Ibrahim, who has challenged abuses against Kenyans of Somali origin; and John Khaminwa. Kiraitu Murungi escaped arrest because he was out of the country attending a conference. Another lawyer, Paul Muite, went into hiding. Muite came to the United States in 1988 to receive the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award for his colleague Gibson Kamau Kuria, who had been banned from traveling. Kuria himself, who took refuge in the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi on July 7, was allowed to fly to London after intense diplomatic negotiations.

Kuria, 43, is a hero of the international human rights movement. Since he began practicing law, in 1981, he has been representing victims of abuses. On February 26, 1987, he was arrested, shortly after filing a suit on behalf of three detainees who had been wrongfully imprisoned and tortured. He was mistreated in detention and was held without charge until December 12, 1987, when Moi bowed to international clamor for his release. Despite continued harassment thereafter, Kuria remained outspoken and maintained his legal efforts on behalf of other victims of abuses.

At about the time that Mandela was speaking in Nairobi, Kuria was holding a press conference at the London offices of Africa Watch. He told journalists:

> The Kenya I left behind is one where in Nairobi and some towns up-country, people are afraid of going about their duties because of the fear of the police, which has been harassing Kenyans since 16 June 1990, when President Moi declared that the debate on the multiparty system had ended and that the critics of the one-party system would be dealt with. The Kenya I left behind is also one where very many people want political pluralism to be introduced now, are defiant and are poised to continue demanding [it]. . . . It is one where journalists and musicians are being harassed for going about their work. It is one where people are being beaten up because of expressing dissent. It is one where some people were engaging in actions of lawlessness. It is one where the government had elected to listen to only its supporters and flatterers.

A particularly unfortunate aspect of Mandela's failure to recognize this state of affairs, and his appearance at a rally with Moi, is that it took place the day after Florence Imanyara, Halima Ibrahim, Joyce Khaminwa and Ida Betty Odinga (wife of another detainee, political critic Raila Odinga) delivered an open letter to the A.N.C. leader pleading with him to intercede with Moi on behalf of their husbands and three others. Expressing their admiration for Mandela's own struggle, and for his wife's fortitude in fighting for his release, the Kenyan women wrote, "What is even more painful than the imprisonment of the black man by the white man is the unjustified imprisonment of the black man by the black man when the black man seeks enjoyment of the very liberty and human rights for which the black man has fought the white man." At least publicly, Mandela disregarded this plea.

The imprisoned lawyers were released on July 25 as indications mounted that their continued detention would cost Kenya badly needed international aid and tourist revenues. Others, including former Cabinet members Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia, who have advocated multiparty democracy, remain in incommunicado detention at this writing.

The sense of disappointment over Nelson Mandela's statement in Kenya is all the more acute because, though he consorted with heads of state and other important personages elsewhere, he did not seem to lose his bearings. It would be comforting to think that he will reflect on his experience in Nairobi and that he will come to realize that, despite his reluctance to turn his back on the black African leaders who supported his struggle all these years, it is not the likes of Kenya's Moi, Zaire's Mobutu, Somalia's Siad Barre and Ethiopia's Mengistu who stand for what he stands for. The black Africans who have championed the rights of those who have been oppressed by these corrupt and brutal leaders, among them Kenya's human rights lawyers, also supported Mandela's struggle. Although powerless today, they are the ones who deserve his support.

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ARTICLES.

LETTER FROM EUROPE

Herr Kohl's New Economic Order

DANIEL SINGER

Nineteen ninety-three, with its single market and its important steps toward monetary and political union, was to have been Europe's momentous year. But crumbling walls alter perspectives and timetables. With Chancellor Helmut Kohl successfully rushing the Germans into reunification, the size, shape and future of Europe are being determined now. At first, the eastward drive of the Federal Republic, its new *Drang nach Osten*, raised the question of whether it might find the framework of the European Economic Community too narrow and constraining. Those fears were then superseded by a much larger concern: Would a reunited Germany dominate the community as the mark already dominates the currencies of Western Europe? Or to put it another way, can Germany play the same role in the Common Market that Prussia used to play in the German *Zollverein*—that of a unifier, a federator?

These problems now come to the surface because of the dramatic shift in the balance of forces in Europe. The Warsaw Pact, though not yet disbanded, is vanishing. With the huge arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union, the smaller ones of Britain and France, and so many weapons still in the pipeline, it is inaccurate to talk of the end of the cold war, at least in military terms. But the ideological contest, for the time being, is over; Russia no longer claims to be forging an alternative, a radically different kind of society. The political climate has altered beyond recognition, and only the pundits of the Western left, like mandarins still protected by a mental wall, act as if they are unaware of the upheaval, the risks involved and the opportunities offered.

No Repeat of Rapallo

Whenever Germany turns its attention eastward, Western commentators revive the ghost of Rapallo. But the international context today is entirely different from that of 1922, when the Soviet Union and Germany surprised the world by announcing their economic and military pact. Then, the two countries were the outsiders of the postwar settlement, the outcasts of Versailles. Now, the Soviet Union is staging a historic return—not a very triumphant one, despite Gorbachev's great diplomatic skills—into the capitalist concert of nations. And Germany, far from being an outcast, is the pillar of the Western establishment. The past nine months have confirmed the obvious fact that this economic giant will not remain a political dwarf for very long. Indeed, they have revealed spectacularly how dominant a position Germany occupies in Europe.

For a brief spell late last year, the bullying Kohl seemed to be getting too big for his boots. When he produced his ten-point reunification plan without consulting anybody and stubbornly refused to recognize the Oder-Neisse Line as Germany's permanent frontier, both Paris and London showed signs of impatience. At the beginning of this year, Washington came to the rescue. Did the Germans give some guarantees about the U.S. economic and military presence in Europe after 1993? Or did Bush simply decide to back the likely winner? Whatever the deal, the United States gave Kohl its wholehearted support, which allowed him to go on dictating the pace of events unperturbed by the objections of his European allies.

In fact, he could even afford to spare their finer feelings. Having dragged his feet long enough to prove his "nationalism" for domestic electoral purposes, Kohl could now follow the advice of his Foreign Minister and resign himself to the inevitable recognition of the Oder-Neisse frontier. Second, since the French were arguing that German reunification should be coupled with a more rapid integration of the European Community, the Chancellor was ready, even eager, to oblige. It was under pressure from Kohl and French President François Mitterrand that the community decided to hold two major intergovernmental conferences in Rome this December: one devoted to economic and monetary union and another, still rather vague, dealing with political unity and a new Constitution for the community. The Twelve will then have a couple of years to work out a blueprint for a future federation.

France's basic motive for linking reunification to a speeded-up process of European integration is to make sure that Germany, in search of its Eastern destiny, does not change sides. The flaw in the French argument is that Germany's financial strength, industrial power and geographical location will allow it both to dominate Western Europe and to preside over Eastern Europe's conversion to capitalism. Indeed, the former could clearly help the latter.

Kaiser Mark the Federator?

The Common Market is the combined product of the cold war and of farsighted capitalist vision. It has now lasted for a third of a century, presiding over a great deal of economic integration. But the realization of a single United States of Western Europe, which was the vision of its founders, is still very distant. Until now, it was believed that there could be no federation for want of a federator, each of the three potential candidates having proved unwilling or unable to carry out the task.

The United States, the original sponsor of the whole European operation, was content to talk of the "two pillars of the Atlantic Alliance" as long as one pillar—the American one—was incomparably stronger than the other and a united Europe could be seen as a junior partner. As soon as it became obvious that a closely knit Europe would be a

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serious economic rival, Washington changed its line. The French bid for leadership was an illusion that lasted only as long as Charles de Gaulle's skill and charisma could conceal the economic imbalance between France and West Germany. The Federal Republic was, on the face of it, the only serious contender, yet it could not bid for the leadership of an independent Europe as long as it accepted the division of the world into two blocs and its own dependence on the U.S. nuclear umbrella. But those two handicaps may now be in the process of disappearing.

West Germany has always been something of a *primus inter pares* within the European Community. Other European currencies have been aligned with the mark, and the Bundesbank has shaped financial policy and determined interest rates. As a rule, new projects within the community are proposed by the French, elaborated by the Brussels Commission, opposed by the British and then settled when the Germans say how far the projects should go.

There is, then, a French-German axis of a sort within the community, but the weight of Germany is predominant. And what was true of the Federal Republic on its own will be even truer of the new Germany, with its nearly 80 million inhabitants. Reunification may cause mass unemployment and play havoc with the lives of millions of East Germans, but it will be, on balance, beneficial for German capital, which will be better equipped than ever to play a crucial role in the West and to venture further in the East.

It probably will not be German social democracy that colors the future of Western Europe. What is being built now is the Europe of Konrad Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard, the German model of big business with Christian Democratic blessing. France illustrates the pattern. Earlier this year a statistical study revealed that in the 1980s, with France ruled for the first time in its history by a directly elected Socialist President, the earnings of labor stagnated while those of capital rocketed. Perturbed by the publication of this news, and by undeniable popular discontent, Mitterrand made a public fuss about the need to do something for those with the lowest incomes. His sentiments were duly echoed by his Prime Minister and Finance Minister, yet all of them, their assistants and the pundits also insisted that one must proceed very cautiously. If higher wages squeezed profits, French firms would not be able to compete, and if capital were taxed, it would simply run away. (On July 1, eight of the twelve European Community countries removed all remaining restrictions on the movement of capital.)

Deregulation, the free movement of money and labor—anything that facilitates for capital its task of exploitation—is enacted with ease in the community. The E.C.'s Social Charter and any measures designed to reduce inequalities and help the downtrodden meet resistance and are marginalized. Unless something drastic is done, this is the kind of Europe that Herr Kohl and his fellows are shaping for the end of this millennium.

Who's Afraid of the Warsaw Pact?

The last obstacle on the road to German unity, as mapped out by Kohl, was the potential Soviet veto on a reunified Germany's right to become a member of NATO. Stalin transformed Eastern Europe primarily for reasons of security, not out of revolutionary conviction. The Russians, with their terrible memories of the last war, have every reason to demand guarantees against its repetition. They also have the legal right, as one of the four victors, to veto any final settlement. That is why frantic efforts were made to induce them to accept the Kohl-Bush version of Europe's future.

The NATO summit, held in London July 5-6, broke all records for Madison Avenue diplomacy. It was hailed as an epoch-making turning point, whereas the only concrete measure it produced was the decision to remove U.S. nuclear artillery shells from Europe. Since these could now be used only against, say, President Vaclav Havel's Czechoslovakia or the Hungarians (who are now eager to join NATO), it was hardly a concession likely to stir Soviet generals. The rest was fiction. The pledge to refrain from the use or threat of force is already binding on all members of the United Nations. The promise to treat nuclear arms as weapons of "last resort" was not coupled with any commit-

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ment not to use them first. And one could go on.

Nevertheless, the Russian leaders have greeted as steps in the right direction the general declaration that the Soviet Union is no longer the enemy, and the vague suggestion that the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (which groups thirty-five European nations with the United States and Canada) may have a greater role to play. Some Western commentators saw this reaction as proof that what Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev needs at this stage is a lot of economic aid and a little window dressing. Others went further, claiming that Moscow really wants Germany in NATO so that the Americans will keep it in check. But that is going too far. Even in the worst of circumstances, it would take Germany quite some time to become a direct military threat to the Soviet Union. What the Russians have always feared is a Germany bent on *revanche*, playing a crucial part in the Western alliance and triggering American nuclear arms. That should have prompted them to keep Germany out of NATO.

Whereas Khrushchev was looking for rules under which each system could peacefully prove its superiority, Gorbachev is seeking a place for the Soviet Union in the capitalist world system.

On the other hand, the extent of the reappraisal of Soviet strategy was shown in Eduard Shevardnadze's significant speech to the 28th Communist Party Congress. Turning on military critics of the Gorbachev line, the Soviet Foreign Minister reminded them that the country could not afford to spend a quarter of its budget on defense. He estimated the "peace dividend" for 1991-95 at about 250 billion rubles (a figure he could not easily justify when it came to question time) and stated plainly that "a ruined country and an impoverished people" needed neither an army nor a defense.

Shevardnadze went further, claiming that the Soviet Union could have "no future outside integration into the worldwide system of economic and financial institutions and ties." He sees the Soviet Union taking its place among other economic centers "alongside Europe, the U.S.A., Japan and the Asia-Pacific region." It was here that one could hear the language of peaceful coexistence, as preached by Nikita Khrushchev and Gorbachev. Whereas Khrushchev was looking for rules under which each system could peacefully prove its superiority, Gorbachev is seeking a place for the Soviet Union in the capitalist world system. German membership in NATO seems to be the price of admission, and the Soviet leader finally paid it in Zheleznovodsk during Herr Kohl's Caucasian journey. (The package includes a ceiling of 370,000 troops for a united Germany and, presumably, the prospect of substantial economic aid for the Soviet Union.)

A Farewell to Arms?

Questions about Western intentions are even more numerous. For years the arms race has been both a mechanism of economic management and an instrument of foreign policy. The United States has always tried to retain its position as the dominant nuclear superpower in order to dictate the rules of coexistence, and above all to prevent the spread of movements of national liberation. While the Cuban "missile crisis" of 1962 strengthened the U.S.'s hand, the Vietnam War showed the limits of its international power.

Soviet foreign policy, one must never tire of repeating, was not subordinated to the interests of world revolution. After the early Bolshevik days, the very opposite was true. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union could often appear—and sometimes even acted—as the protector of national liberation movements. To people rebelling against capitalist oppression it appeared from a distance as a model and a leader. It is this ambiguous position as headquarters of an alternative world that Moscow now shows every sign of being ready to give up.

Western reactions to this offer vary. There is general agreement among Western leaders that Gorbachev's venture is heading in the right direction and should be encouraged (Shevardnadze has now confirmed that the sweeping changes in Eastern Europe were no accident but part of a policy). But there are differences on how best to prod him on. The Germans, with their stake in an immediate deal, and the French are in favor of giving Gorbachev the benefit of the doubt and substantial loans—$15 billion to $20 billion to begin with—to ease his perilous period of transition. The British and the Americans are for treating Russia just like Eastern Europe, granting it credits only if it gives open proof of its conversion to capitalism, duly tested and approved by the International Monetary Fund. Indeed, President Bush would also like to make such credits conditional on Moscow ending its military aid to Cuba.

Much more is at stake now than this sordid bargaining. The world has a unique opportunity to scrap its nuclear arsenal and reduce its military expenditures, not cosmetically but drastically. On the other hand, throughout the postwar period the arms budget has been the main engine of the West's economic "miracle." In the hour of their apparent triumph, it is not clear whether the Western powers have either the imagination or the capacity to alter radically their system of rule. Can they—if not in the Third World then at least in Europe—switch from a military posture to the more subtle policy of conquest through capitalist penetration?

Our *Kulturkampf*

So many question marks remain because what is now being built, on the ruins of Yalta, is an entirely new order, a new framework for solving international conflicts. The extraordinary thing about this new order is that it is being imposed entirely from above. Last year the Eastern Europeans reminded us that people can be the actors in their own drama.

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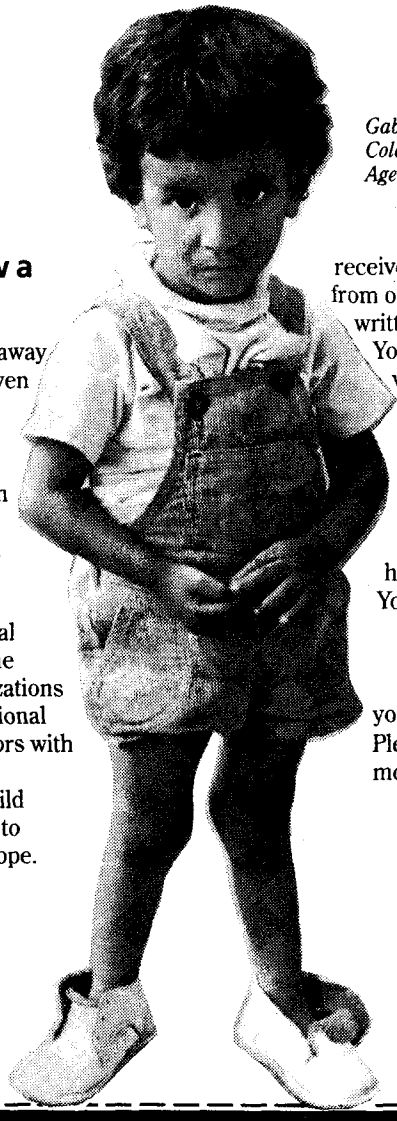

Gabriel Cortez
Colombia
Age 4

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Today the Western Europeans observe crucial changes with the passivity, though not the passion, of television viewers watching the soccer World Cup (won, appropriately enough, by the Germans). The passivity is all the more remarkable since the events just described suggest tremendous scope for a radical movement.

In the first place, there is now the opportunity for an unprecedented campaign for disarmament, both nuclear and conventional. Given the talks on Germany, this could begin with a proposal to remove nuclear weapons from central Europe and—why not?—neutralize the whole area. It should then extend to mass demonstrations against the nuclear midgets (France and Britain) and, above all, the nuclear giants (the Soviet Union and the United States). The campaign should demand the abolition of atomic weapons, a drastic cut in all military expenditures and the rapid transfer of these huge resources to such purposes as genuine aid to the Third World and the salvation of the earth from ecological disaster. If our politicians fail to make more than marginal reductions in military spending, they will reveal themselves as what they really are—the servants or accomplices of the armorers.

The second line of action, in Europe, is dictated by the proposed integration of the European Community. The labor movement has internationalism thrust upon it. If they do not oppose the offensive of capital by common action across national frontiers, the already weakened labor unions will be committing political suicide. Although defensive measures to protect working people are not very revolutionary in themselves, they could create quite a stir in the current ideological climate, in which deregulation is the gospel, private is beautiful and profit virtuous. By describing the utter collapse of the Soviet model as the final failure of socialism the establishment has managed to greatly reinforce that mood.

Not so paradoxically, the events in Eastern Europe should soon spur the Western left into action by depriving the Communists of the remnants of a model and the Social Democrats of a bogy and an excuse for inaction. The left must now say independently what its own solutions are. Admittedly, it may take some time to reinvent a project based on the principle that power flows from the grass roots. Meanwhile, we should react against the overwhelming international campaign that aims to persuade us all that capitalism is our ultimate destination. It is our *Kulturkampf* to preserve the spirit of resistance, to battle against the odds in order to convince an increasing number of people that there is, and must be, an alternative to the alienated world of commercialized culture and faceless corporations, to the Europe of Wunderkohl and company. □

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PINOCHET'S VICTIMS IN CHILE

Freedom Is the Best Revenge

CLAUDIA DREIFUS

For most of the sixteen long years of military dictatorship in Chile, Roberto Garretón Merino served as the national legal director of the Vicariate of Solidarity, one of the country's two major human rights organizations. The Vicaría provided legal assistance for the abused, documented their pain, gave shelter to the Relatives of the Dead and Disappeared, and published Solidarity, *a newspaper that was one of the few accurate sources of information available to Chileans during the darker moments of censorship. Last spring, just before Patricio Aylwin assumed the presidency, Garretón outlined to* The Nation *the strategies of human rights organizations in the new Chilean democracy. Garretón, like many key human rights leaders, is in a bind: Sixteen years of murder and torture require justice—yet no one wants to trigger a new military coup. Since our interview, Garretón has been appointed head of a special office of human rights in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

There have also been some important changes on the Chilean political scene. In the weeks after Aylwin's inauguration, a National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation began assembling testimony for a report similar to Argentina's Nunca Más *("Never Again"). The mere existence of the commission, which had no prosecutorial powers, so agitated the military that threatening noises were made against the fledgling democracy. Then in June, the bodies of twenty-one supporters of President Salvador Allende, murdered in the aftermath of the 1973 coup, were found near the northern town of Pisagua, and their exhumation opened up a wellspring of national anger. Suddenly, more Chileans are willing to talk about their past, new graves are being located, new evidence of old atrocities is being uncovered. "The ground is speaking," one Chilean woman told me.*

What was unimaginable in March is beginning to be imaginable now: Large sectors of the Chilean public might support some trials for human rights abuses, and there really might be a genuine opening for national debate about a

Claudia Dreifus, who writes frequently about Latin America, is writing a book with Martin Klein titled Nancy Klein's Right to Life.

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painful and unresolved past. Meanwhile, Chilean human rights activists are pursuing the tactics Roberto Garretón suggests here: the encouragement of public discussions, symbolic reparations, a reinterpretation of history that would restore the idea that the junta's victims were "heroes," not "terrorists."

CLAUDIA DREIFUS: I have the impression that human rights is an issue that makes the new government extremely nervous. There is this odd situation here of Pinochet remaining as Commander in Chief, of his having packed the Supreme Court and the Senate with his own people, of his having amnestied human rights crimes before 1978. And, as a *coup de grâce*, Pinochet has said something to the effect of "touch one of my men and the rule of law will end." And it seems as if Aylwin's people are taking this threat seriously. One gets the sense here that the Aylwin government wants enough space to establish the strength of a democratic regime—and that is paramount.

ROBERTO GARRETÓN: Well, Aylwin constantly says that what has happened in Chile will not be forgotten. He has also appointed a great many people active in the human rights cause to his government. I'm very optimistic that the government will do whatever it can on the freeing of political prisoners and the clearing up of past violations of human rights. There might not be justice done, though.

CD: What do you mean?

RG: To get justice, we will need new laws. And for those laws, we require agreement in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The problem is that in the Senate, the right has a majority—though not because of the popular vote. What happened was that under Pinochet's Constitution, he was able to appoint nine senators, and they give the right a majority. Of the elected senators, twenty-two are from the Concertación [Aylwin's center-left coalition], versus sixteen from the other parties. Thus, the appointed nine make the difference. It will not be possible to repeal Pinochet's Amnesty Law [which forgives all political crimes before 1978]. Aylwin has said that if you cannot repeal the amnesty, then at least every investigation shall be made to learn the truth about what happened.

The thing you must realize is that the Concertación won the plebiscite and the presidential election by following a procedure established by the dictatorship in Pinochet's 1980 Constitution. In doing that, it abandoned the attempt to challenge the legitimacy of the dictatorship's laws. The government will try to modify the laws—but through the means that have been set up by the dictatorship.

We have to be careful not to get into the same bind that some of the Mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina got into when they said that nothing was enough. Most Argentines just didn't understand them. Some of them were demanding the liberty of the disappeared prisoners and blamed [Presidents Raúl] Alfonsín and [Saúl] Menem for not producing them alive. It is a terrible challenge for human rights groups: to be careful not to cut links with the rest of the population. Frankly, when you think of what Alfonsín accomplished, it is quite something. Three full juntas in prison! Three! Let's not be unfair to Alfonsín.

CD: There is a Relatives of the Dead and Disappeared group within the Vicaría. I've talked to them. They want punishment for the killers of their relatives.

RG: The point is that we can't get the punishment they want because there is an amnesty. And we don't have the political strength to get rid of it. . . . Actually, I have also spoken to relatives of the disappeared. Deep inside, they think the most important thing is that what we have experienced here in Chile must never happen again. If they can get that by paying the price of renouncing their legitimate demands, they would accept it. Not all of them say this—but many. Theirs is an attitude of great generosity.

CD: Let me ask you about some of the more creative strategies people have been talking about when discussing how to put human rights more on the public agenda. What do you think of the idea I've heard in Santiago of reburying Allende and turning that event into a National Day of Remembrance and Mourning?

RG: As long as we do it on September 11. And we would

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have to be careful that the military didn't hold up that date as their day of triumph. I agree on one aspect: We must have some kind of reparation against the evil that existed here. What we need is a kind of historical reparation, in which we see the repressed person as a hero. If tomorrow we can manage to have the Avenue of September 11 renamed for Salvador Allende, for instance, that would be something. If in each town where someone was detained or kidnapped we put up a plaque where we tell the story, we've done something. That's much more reparation than all the money in the world.

CD: So what you really want is to take back the language and the history of Chile?

RG: Yes. For instance, a very close friend of mine who studied law with me was shot as a "terrorist" in 1973. If tomorrow there is a street named for him, the family has more reparation than if a general is put in jail. And it's less conflictive for society. Our triumph would be for the lady who wants trial and punishment for someone whose identity she doesn't even know. Instead she will get a plaque that indicates the name of her son as a hero. This will be a much better psychological reparation than jailing the perpetrator.

CD: Do you think the Chilean national character was damaged by sixteen years of dictatorship?

RG: Oh yes. Our moral values were perverted. We stopped demanding justice. People were willing to have the dictatorship end at any cost. And the fact remains that a great many Chileans supported the dictatorship. There is a question to which I have found no answer: How is it possible that there was no real difference in the vote for Pinochet or his surrogate between the plebiscite and the election? He always receives 45 percent of the vote. That is a fact! And it should be considered by those who ask of Aylwin that he become the Judge of Nuremberg!

CD: To change the subject slightly, there are people at the next table trying to listen to every word we're speaking—does that make you nervous?

RG: Oh, it is nothing. I like to be a provocateur. I like to talk loud and make people reflect.

CD: So what are the secrets of keeping your soul together in bad places during bad times?

RG: What has allowed me to survive here all these years is that I exercise to the utmost special freedoms that no dictatorship can suppress. The truth is that dictators dream about suppressing all liberties, but there is a space that they cannot suppress, which is your internal mood. Once, twelve years ago, I got into a cab with a driver from the security forces, and I spoke with him about the dictatorship. If I had noticed him speaking on the radio or taking me on a different road, I knew that at some red light, I could open the door and just throw myself out of the cab. But I was not going to renounce the space I had, if that didn't happen. This philosophy has allowed me to survive psychologically, knowing that there is a space that no dictatorship can reach.

CD: You must feel tremendous satisfaction that you never gave in.

RG: Yes, of course. Many people never gave in. I do know that the democratic conquests of the Chileans are due to two factors. First, the work of organizations for human rights. We're maybe 200 people, but we have some sort of power. Second, there was an international consensus that in Chile there was an atrocious regime. Early on, we decided never to exaggerate the information that we gave out on human rights violations. If there were 500 dead people, we never said 10,000. Gradually, we gained the confidence of international public opinion in our accuracy. And with that, we gained a great deal of credibility. And it helped. What happened in Paraguay, for instance? For more than thirty years, the world community forgot Paraguay. And that's why Stroessner lasted for more than thirty years! Chile was never forgotten outside the country, and that's why Pinochet believes that the planet is against him.

CD: During all the long years of dictatorship, did you ever think you'd live to see such a thing as the restoration of democracy? Several people quite close to you were killed.

RG: If I had been internally exiled, I would have come back to Santiago. If I had been expelled from the country, I would have come back some day. If I had been detained, I could have run away. But there was one right whose violation would have left me with no alternative. If I had been killed, then there would be nothing I could do. I always thought Pinochet had a lot of prerogatives—but not all of them. . . . You know, Pinochet thought he'd be in power for eternity. When he had the Constitution of 1980 written, it was to maintain that. The Constitution was basically written in such a way that even if a civilian government were chosen, the armed forces would remain as the owners of power.

Under Pinochet, the power of the dictator, the whole activity of the state, was directed toward maintaining the power of the armed forces. From 1973 until now, we have lived always counting how many were dead and how many were detained. If a moment came when there were fewer dead and fewer detained, we always said, "Ah, the situation is better for human rights." But that was a deeply erroneous statement. The problem is not one of numbers. The problem is who decides who lives and who dies, who is in jail and who is free. If Pinochet could kill with impunity, it was the same thing as actually doing it. On December 14, 1989, when we elected Aylwin President, all that changed. Before that, Pinochet had political power over the lives of the people. And that day he lost it.

What we will have in Chile is what exists in any civilized country: Every citizen knows that the state cannot violate his rights with impunity. I have never met an American who thinks that the police can come and kidnap him at 5 A.M. Until now Chileans have not managed to have that. But we are much closer to it now than we were a few years ago. I will know that we have achieved respect for human rights here when I am positive that no one will violate them. I would like to reach the moment when Chileans feel that if

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the doorbell rings at 5 A.M., they will be certain that it is only the milkman. □

Break the Blocs

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

they do not trust. All this still feeds daily and weekly into the wider political process.

Yet I look back upon the past twelve months as a time in which we in the European peace movement failed to make the most of a great moment of opportunity. There have been political reasons for this: the lack of a clear program, the failure to find the right point of intervention. As the extraordinary events of October to December 1989 unfolded, and as the giant political actors pursued their own negotiations, the peace movement was frozen into a posture of *attentisme*—a wait-and-see policy, offering commentary but abandoning the attempt to interject its own script.

Not only in Britain but in Western Europe and in the United States as well there has been a general retreat of political forces on the center and left. Some are content to stand on the sidelines and leave everything to Presidents Bush and Gorbachev. Others are in the grip of a modish defeatism. They can see nothing in the events of the past year but the triumph of Western capitalism, which is of course precisely what triumphant capitalists wish people to see.

If that premise can be sold to the people of Europe, East as well as West, then this political moment, which even now remains open, will return to closure, and a settlement can be imposed that is acceptable to unreconstructed Western militarism and diplomacy. That settlement will not end the cold war but will extend it forward for decades in a skewed form. And it could do worse than that.

The crux is the "German question," which is not a German question at all but a European question, a question of whether and how to abolish the blocs, or whether to strengthen one against the other; in short, a global question. These past months have seen an ugly attempt by NATO strategists to play a confidence trick on the people of Europe, culminating in the one-sided settlement of a reunited Germany within the structures of NATO and outside the Warsaw Pact. As a "concession" the Soviet Union has been graciously "permitted" by NATO to station some troops on former East German territory for two or three years more.

To say that such a "settlement" is a gross historical injustice is to employ a term far too abstract to engage the mind. At the risk of proving myself to be boring and senile, I must fall back on more concrete memories of World War II.

Long before that war was officially started the Nazi and Fascist (and also imperial Japanese) forces were on the offensive. Mussolini invaded Albania and Ethiopia. Hitler effected the *Anschluss* with Austria, bit off the Sudetenland, and Germany and Italy helped Franco destroy the Spanish Republic. Then came full European war: Poland was invaded (and carved up with Stalin), then Belgium, Holland, Denmark, half of France, Norway, Yugoslavia, Greece. By 1941 the only places in Western and Southern Europe free from Axis occupation were Britain, a few neutral nations, and some mountaintops in Montenegro, Bosnia and Norway, where partisans clung on.

It was a catastrophic record of defeat and retreat. Then Hitler, having failed to occupy the British skies, turned his motorized forces against the Soviet Union. For a year or more the record was the same. Vast territories were overrun—the Baltic states, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and thence deeply toward the Caucasus. Leningrad was placed under siege and the panzers were on the edge of Moscow.

Then a remarkable thing happened. For the first time the Axis forces were stopped. When it seemed impossible that the Soviet Union could still have an industry or support a war machine, the men, women and children went out and stopped the panzers with gasoline bombs and with their bare hands. In Leningrad poets and workers and scholars kept themselves alive through two bitter winters by burning their books and their floorboards and their children's toys. Moscow repeated (but with better success) the desperate people's defense of Madrid.

Meanwhile the best that the "free world" could do was to check the Axis forces before Cairo, at El Alamein. It was a serious and hard-fought battle, but not one likely to save the world. That privilege was left to the Soviet people.

No one was more aware of this than the British and Allied forces in the Near and Middle East. They knew their very survival depended on the Russians. To prompt my memory I have been looking over letters my brother wrote home in 1941-42. In November 1941 he wrote from Syria that "the sacrifices of the Russians make Coventry and London look like a couple of train accidents."

By the summer of 1942 my brother's unit was sent to Persia, partly to guard supply routes to the Soviet Union, partly as a possible backstop in case (as seemed increasingly likely) the Axis forces broke through the Caucasus and Georgia. The key to that lay in a place called Stalingrad. It has changed its name now, but I dare say there is an antique shop in North London that still has a map with the old name.

In September 1942 my brother was "knob twiddling" on his radio: "At the moment Stalingrad is the focus of all the world's broadcasting. Pick up any station—German, French, Italian, Arabic, half-a-dozen assorted Slavs . . . you won't be able to hear three sentences without the word 'Stalingrad' coming in unmistakeably." Three days later the weather began to break and he wrote in profound relief:

> All of us . . . are glad at the news of it. At the cookhouse, in the fitter's shop, in the small canteen tent where they gather for the evenings, men look with relief and gratitude to the coming rain. Rain here will mean rain at Mozdok and Tuapse. Rain here will mean rain on all the approaches to Stalingrad. Rain here will mean rain at Voronezh, Orel and Kalinin. Rain here will mean rain, and shortly snow, on the roads that lead from Viborg, Vilno, Riga, to hard-pressed Leningrad.

E.P. Thompson, a British historian and writer, is a founder of European Nuclear Disarmament. He is also The Nation's *U.K. correspondent.*

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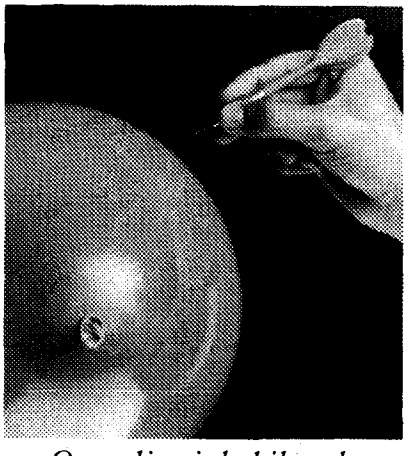

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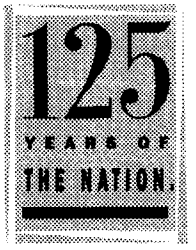

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The rain and snow came just in time. (The second front, please remember, came twenty-one months later, although there was some serious fighting in Italy in the intervening months.) The Axis forces suffered their first shattering defeat at Stalingrad. In 1942, slowly, borne on rivers of blood, the markers on the maps began to move back.

I recall all this boring stuff, which may come strangely from a supporter of today's peace movement, because I wish to give a local habitation to that abstraction "historical injustice." The survival of the "free world" and of British democracy (if that is what we have) owes most of all to that massive transfusion of Russian blood.

That is not an apology for Stalin's policies, either before, during or after the war. It is a plea to the generations who did not live through those years to understand the justice due the Russians. The figure often cited today for Soviet losses in World War II is 20 million—that is more than the combined populations of London, Birmingham, Manchester, Norwich, Bristol and several other cities besides. These vast numbers mean that every Soviet family today lost grandparents and uncles and fathers and sisters. The custom survives for newlyweds to visit the graves on their wedding day.

The custom may die out but the historical memory will not. If suppressed it could return in unexpected and perhaps unwelcome ways. NATO's insistence on imposing an unjust and skewed "settlement," which denies due recognition to Soviet memories, a settlement which may have been accepted reluctantly by a weakened Soviet leadership in return for economic sweeteners, may well nourish a Russian nationalist or militarist comeback in 1992 or 2002.

No nation has less historical memory of Soviet suffering in World War II than the United States. The American people are constantly given the media message that they, almost alone, "won" that war. The 20 million Soviet dead are rarely mentioned, although it is more than three times the appalling figure of the Holocaust (6 million), which is mentioned constantly, as if those massacred Jews were the only victims of that war.

It follows that U.S. policy- and opinion-makers are determined to impose their unilateral settlement on Europe. They suppose themselves to be also the "victors" of the cold war. But the victors were those who brought it to an end: the forces for democracy and renewal in Eastern and Central Europe and the peace movements in the West. If either superpower can claim credit, it is the one that disengaged first from aggressive postures and started to disarm—that is, the Soviet Union.

My brother did not survive that war. Neither, dear reader, did your grandfather or uncle or mother. Neither did countless Norwegians, Dutch, Czechoslovaks, Poles, Belgians, French, Yugoslavs, Indians, New Zealanders, Canadians, Greeks and others. The settlement of the German question is not something to be imposed on all of us by the United States. It involves tender and difficult obligations—not just to future generations but to remembered friends and kin.

Countless Germans and Italians also died, and some Germans and more Italians took part in the anti-Fascist resistance. It is far from my intention to call for vindictive or unforgiving attitudes toward the German people today. On the contrary, I am convinced that German national and cultural traditions have undergone a very significant, and possibly irreversible, change.

I was fortunate enough to be present in October 1981 at the first great manifestation of the newborn West German peace movement in Bonn. All day long, unaggressive and good-humored multitudes, most in their teens or early 20s, thronged through the city like a nation reborn. In the past decade the German people have shown a far greater disposition toward constructive and peaceful diplomacies than have most European nations. They even have a Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who has from time to time been able to block Chancellor Helmut Kohl's NATO-subservient plans. The most militaristic and unconstructive policies in Europe today come not from West Germany but from France, Turkey and Margaret Thatcher's Britain.

There is no way to guarantee that a nation will not revert to its worst traditions. All that one can do is create conditions, and institutions, that foster the good. That is, of course, exactly what NATO is not doing. The peaceful traditions of the new Germany belong with the Social Democrats, the Greens, the churches, the peace movement. In every way the United States and Britain have been ignoring those voices and encouraging Kohl's nationalist *Anschlusspolitik*, with its capitalist animus toward East Germany and Central Europe. Such a triumphalist West Germany will treat the workers of East Germany as a cheap labor reserve.

Nor am I asking the German people to go through the next decades with their heads perpetually bowed in guilt for the sins of the Hitler years. Guilt is an unproductive political passion, and often one that represses or disguises other passions. I am asking the German people to act now, not only

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for the future of Germany but also for the future of Europe and of the world.

That requires a reunited Germany in some form. But not the present one-sided settlement that privileges and strengthens NATO. I will not try to decide which alternative form of settlement would be preferable. Over the past six months Soviet, Czechoslovak and East German diplomats proposed a score of solutions. Those included a neutral and demilitarized Germany, formal membership in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, mutual security arrangements involving both blocs or more complex arrangements involving the thirty-five nations of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. To every single proposal the reply of the United States and NATO was *nyet*—a reply coming so quickly that the proposals must have been unread. The Bush Administration does not even wish its own people to know that any alternative to Germany-in-NATO was possible. When Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel visited the United States, he was leaned on very heavily by Secretary of State James Baker not to mention on television that the Czechoslovaks had alternative proposals. The interesting ideas of Rainer Eppelmann, a veteran of the independent peace movement and now the East German Minister of Defense and Disarmament, have gone almost unnoticed in the West.

If a reunified Germany is to be absorbed into NATO, then we must insure that NATO becomes an irrelevance.

"The underlying attitude in the Administration toward Moscow on that issue," *The New York Times* reported, "was described by one official as: 'We won, you lost. Your allies are asking you to leave, ours are asking us to stay, so we are not equals.'" Baker recently repeated that America's forces will stay in Europe for as long as they are wanted by her allies or needed. Thus the American idea of a "settlement" is for a reunited Germany—and its military forces—in NATO, and the withdrawal, or "rollback," of Soviet forces from Eastern and Central Europe and the Baltic states. Meanwhile, the Truman Doctrine remains in place, U.S. nuclear-armed navies patrol the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, and U.S. bases—with their Tridents and their aircraft armed with nuclear-tipped weapons—remain everywhere in the West and South, from Oxfordshire to the Turkish border with the Soviet Union.

This is no settlement at all. It is a cynical maneuver to derive advantage from the struggles for democracy on the other side. For almost a year we have been passing through a period of unusual political plasticity, when institutions and ideologies can be remolded. This moment is not anyone's triumph or anyone's defeat but everyone's opportunity. The opportunity will not wait around forever.

It is time for Europeans, East and West, to write their own script, for their own and their children's future. This means that the peace movement and its new allies in the East must show their full strength once more and impose a genuine settlement on the politicians. The object of such a settlement would be a truly symmetrical dismantling of both blocs, in which NATO at long last would make concessions that matched the concessions made in the East. The aims must be the denuclearization of Europe, an all-European security system and an all-European development program. In effect, if a reunified Germany is to be absorbed into NATO, then we must insure that NATO becomes an irrelevance.

The peace movement must shed its deference to the superpowers and its presumption that whatever Bush and Gorbachev might agree upon must be the best for us. Those two politicians may have merits (well, one of them may) but they operate within limits and within calculations of short-term political interest. The peace movement has more experience, a more disinterested stance and a longer perspective. Just because Gorbachev seems to have been tempted to give way before unrelenting NATO pressure—and economic bribes—there is no reason why the peace movement should surrender also. Our object remains to destroy the bloc system, and the German question gives us our opportunity to do so.

Both in West Germany and East Germany there are significant forces (among Social Democrats, Greens and also in the East German government) working for alternative solutions. If the German people wish to shed the guilt of the Hitler years they can do this best of all by rejecting Kohl's bullying *Anschlusspolitik* and by insisting that the German solution must and can be only a part of the European resolution of the cold war—a stage in the dissolution of both blocs, with the establishment of mutual security agreements and progressive dealignment leading to the abolition of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

This dealignment is a perfectly feasible project, a realistic agenda for the next two or three years. This should be the price tag set on German reunification. It would be the best insurance for the future of Europe, and in taking the leading part in securing this outcome the German people would earn Europe's gratitude.

But to secure this the European peace movement must once again move in force, as an actor and agenda maker, determined to complete the task it commenced with the END Appeal in 1980. In those early years, 1980-83, British END sometimes was accused by friends of being too sharp in its criticisms of Soviet policies. Now I believe we should say yes to the many constructive Soviet proposals. Not yes without qualification but yes to exploring them, together with the thirty-five nations. If James Baker insists that U.S. forces must remain in Europe for as long as they are wanted or needed, then we must (politely) make it plain that they are wanted and needed no more. No more than Soviet forces and bases are wanted or needed in Czechoslovakia or Hungary. What kind of a "settlement" would it be that evicted one side and left the other fully armed and holding on to all its stations? □

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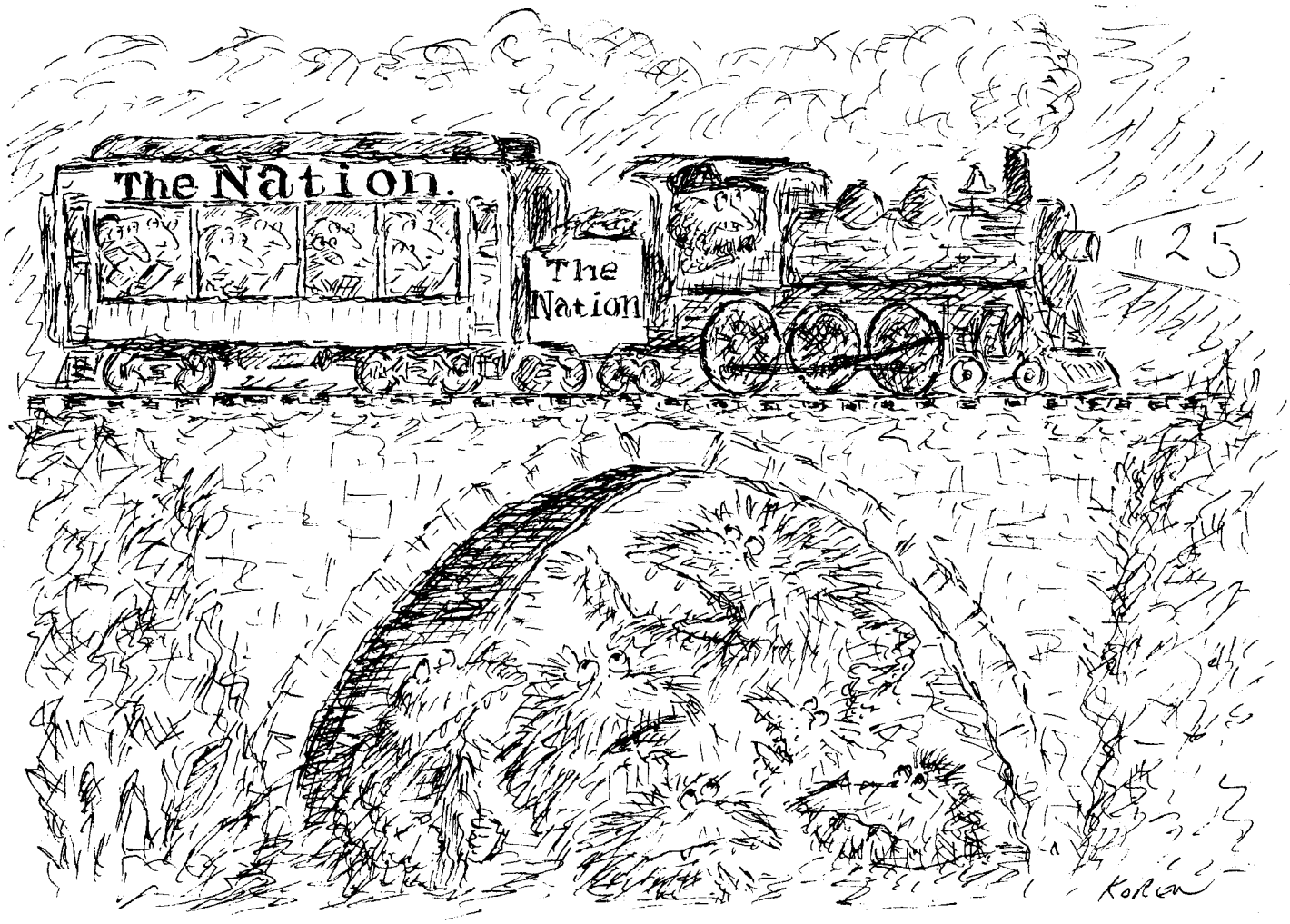

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Triumph of Skepticism

MATTHEW FLAMM

IN THE WESTERN NIGHT: Collected Poems 1965-90. *By Frank Bidart. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 244 pp. $19.95.*

One of the great achievements of Frank Bidart's poems is how little he seems to be in them. That's not faint praise. Whatever the excuses—everything goes and nothing matters, too many writing programs, too little audience—a prevailing tone in contemporary poetry is of someone talking with his face uncomfortably close to one's own. The earnestness is deafening.

Not that this most eccentric of poets and well-known Robert Lowell disciple is cool, detached or impersonal. Bidart has an earnest streak a mile wide; he doesn't feel so much as he anguishes; he has made a career out of being driven. He has also put his obsessiveness to use, crafting wonderfully extreme, wildly idiosyncratic poems that are partly about the narrator's inability to connect with ordinary life. Earnestness in Bidart's hands becomes pure literary device—his only prosody—the scattershot pattern of his verse on the page acting out his two favorite states of being, struggle and torment.

Artifice marks this poet's work from its surface to its core. "There is a NIGHT within the NIGHT," Bidart writes in his basic, verging-on-the-mystical mode. Likewise, there's a story within the story each poem presents: How did a transplanted Easterner, son of a semiliterate, though successful, California potato farmer, wind up without a trace of his father's (and, I assume, his own original) accent? Even in Bidart's candidly autobiographical first book, *Golden State* (1973), written before dramatic monologues became his signature form, he sounds geographically detached, as the few landscape descriptions show just the slightest interest or connection. And why exactly are his best poems dramatic monologues?

These are far from the first thoughts that come to mind upon encountering *In the Western Night: Collected Poems 1965-90*, which combines Bidart's three previous books with two batches of new poems and, oddly but characteristically, an interview. One's first reaction is likely to be fascination and a little awe. The poet, who is literary executor of Lowell's estate (and co-executor of Elizabeth Bishop's), has a mesmeric charm; he keeps the reader pleasantly stunned, as if a veil of perfume had been thrown across each twisted meditation on guilt and rage. Bidart manages this through the intensity of his voice, which admits no irony or humor or any particular sonorousness as it somehow still captivates. And he adds to the dazzle by absorbing an array of sources (Nietzsche, Saint Augustine, obscure psychiatric case studies) into the monologues; an intellectual fervor lifts the poems even further out of the ordinary.

The book's organization, as well, keeps clues to the poet shuffled inside the deck. *In the Western Night* begins with the title collection, consisting of a half-dozen short poems that meditate on past loves (the title phrase is from Allen Ginsberg's hymn to Carl Solomon in *Howl*). It's followed by *The Sacrifice*, Bidart's ambitious 1983 collection, which develops themes from *The Book of the Body* (1977), which comes next. The backward lineup continues with *Golden State*, the logical opener, in which his central motifs are stated most directly. Finally, *The First Hour of the Night*, the other 1990 collection, concludes with its thirty-seven-page title poem that, as the jacket copy says, "can be read as the culmination of Bidart's work to date."

It's not as though he didn't want to be studied. The dense, nearly twenty-page interview (with Mark Halliday) that closes the volume as good as drags us in that direction: In addition to biographical information—his boyhood obsession with cinema, graduate school at Harvard, friendship with Lowell—Bidart lists his literary models (most significantly, Lowell's *Life Studies*, Pound's *Cantos*, and *Howl*) and explains the mysterious workings of his punctuation and syntax (it's to get the movement of his mind/voice onto the page), and his practice, picked up from Paul Valéry, of capitalizing entire words for emphasis. Bidart also discusses his turn from the straightforward family poems to the increasingly elaborate monologues ("The dramatic monologues . . . insofar as they are animated by 'arguments with myself,' don't seem to me any less . . . 'personal' ").

Unusual as it is to find an interview in a volume of collected poems, it would only be Bidart's version of an afterword were it not so . . . Bidartian. With his usual engaging intensity, the poet provides a calculated glimpse of himself (while, control freak that he is, also telling us how to read his poems); again, we hear just his cultivated voice, the interview answers having been reworked into mini-essays: "I began this interview by saying that discovering the subject matter of *Golden State*, as the *necessary* subject matter for me at that time, was bound up with discovering a prosody." Attention shifts from the poet—that is, the man who wrote about growing up in Bakersfield and Bishop, California, not the man who lived it—to the poet's leakproof persona (a little as if Jack Nicholson, doing publicity for *Batman*, had given interviews as The Joker). Pretty much the same effect is achieved through the upside-down ordering of the poems, which, by presenting the author's concerns out of sequence, upsets their relation to his life. "The War of Vaslav Nijinsky," the supremely compelling long poem that opens *The Sacrifice*, flies in from nowhere; we're knocked out, without knowing by whom.

But then, Bidart likes disguises. Although his characters, from the amputee in "The Arc" to the Great War–obsessed Russian dancer, argue metaphysics, the subject remains the one outlined in *Golden State*: how to survive, and put to use, the maiming of the past. Dramatic monologues come in handy, as each persona offers a new past to explore, but what's crucial is that the poet find a character (it could be a variation of his own) for whom intellectual argument does not sound foreign. Bidart, in his early poems, longs to have had a richer cultural background, without the baggage of lunacy and divorce. Cultivating an educated tone, he's a little awkward, a little obvious: "I think of Proust . . . /his novel which recaptures the past, and/with a kind of joy,/because/in the debris/of the past/he has found the sources of the necessities/which have led him to this room, writing." The work improves not because the alcoholic-farmer's son settles down as a Wellesley College professor but be-

Matthew Flamm is a reporter for the New York Post.

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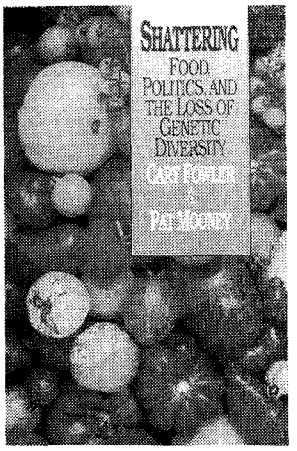
cause the poet makes his predicament less personal. The further removed he gets from his culturally impoverished state—the more made-up the scene he creates—the less self-conscious the stretch from himself. Bidart handles the most abrasive issues of his past through the thick gloves of a new identity:

> —Should the World
> *regret* the War? Should I
> REGRET MY LIFE?
> . . . Let our epitaph be:
> *In Suffering, and Nightmare,*
> *I woke at last*
> *to my own nature.*
> ("The War of Vaslav Nijinsky")

Bidart also makes do with less and less physical description. A keen visual imagination is not one of this poet's gifts—something he's been taken to task for in the past. In his early "California Plush," possibly the most descriptive poem of his career, he *lists* rather than evokes: "A dark room, with amber water glasses, walnut/tables, captain's chairs,/plastic doilies, papier-mâché bas-relief wall ballerinas." The failing owes partly to his being drawn to mental and emotional states, rather than places, things or sensations. But there's also a sense in which a too particular or personal apprehension of details would cost him his anonymity; Bidart needs vagueness in order to roam unidentified in and out of his characters. This almost absent-minded approach to the physical world sets him considerably apart from Lowell, as Bidart himself points out in the interview: The poems in *Life Studies*, he says, are "great glowing static panels in brilliant super-saturated technicolor, a world that refuses knowledge of the *causes* beneath it, without chance for change or escape."

At the time he was writing *Golden State*, Bidart continues, he was "engaged in an argument" with *Life Studies*. That helps explain how he could come off scot-free of influence after joining Lowell's writing class at Harvard in 1966 and becoming his most trusted literary sounding board. But it's also true that from the start Bidart had his own agenda, one with no use for Lowell-like autobiography. Rather than capture moments in his history, he posits a struggle between an impossible ideal and the darkest reality—the hope of being free of the past versus the fear he never will be. The dialectic, combined with the characters' clear-eyed self-analysis (they're never crazy, even if they seem to be), gives the



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monologues their pathos and drama. In "Ellen West" (from *The Book of the Body*) the conflict takes the form of an anorexic young woman's wish to be all soul, no body; to control her destiny by rejecting her inherited, big-boned form. "*The only way/to escape/the History of Styles/is not to have a body*," the eponymous narrator suggests after musing on Maria Callas's various weight and voice problems. The poem, rescuing Ellen from psychiatric literature, commemorates her heroism. It's clear from her suicide note to a former fellow patient that she took her only chance for change or escape:

> How eager I have been
> to compromise, to kill this *refuser*,—
>
> but each compromise, each attempt
> to poison an ideal
> which often seemed to *me* sterile and
> unreal,
>
> heightens my hunger.
>
> I am crippled. I disappoint you.
>
> Will you greet with anger, or
> happiness,
>
> the news which might well reach you
> before this letter?

Bidart, too, believes in what he knows can't be real. That belief supplies the lyrical ingredient to these long, talky, essentially didactic poems: For all that he occasionally overworks an insight, stating the obvious in tone-deaf proclamations, he can still lose himself in some basic mystery. Curiously, that visionary moment doesn't have to be a personal one per se; going by the interview and notes at the back of *In the Western Night*, this poet, even when not writing in persona, has the eerie ability to use other people's memories, dreams and reflections as his own. These psychic grafts take so smoothly because the root of the enterprise—the poet—is himself an artificial creation. But most interestingly, other people's illuminations serve as Bidart's sideways access to transcendence, his method of having his cake and undercutting it too.

Witness his use of Saint Augustine in "Confessional," one of the two main poems in *The Sacrifice* (Bidart writes long poems but blessedly short books). Like Ginsberg's *Kaddish*, which is this poem's closest relative, Bidart's semi-autobiographical, twenty-two-page elegy for his mother is largely concerned with guilt. Distraught over the unresolved nature of their relationship, the poem's narrator dreams of forgiving his mother for all she did while alive; the reality is that he can't. "Her plea, her need for forgiveness/seemed the attempt to obliterate//the ACTIONS, ANGERS, DECISIONS// that *made me* what I am . . ." By way of contrast, he brings up Book Nine of the *Confessions*, in which Augustine and Monica share a moment of cosmic togetherness overlooking a garden. "The scene at the window at Ostia," the narrator notes, is the model of a mother-son reconciliation, "designed to make non-believers//sick with envy . . ."

The scene, in other words, presents an ideal, out-of-reach instance in which the past need not be obliterated to be transcended. And for Bidart, the further beyond reach, the better. The sight of their perfect union, of Monica—so unlike his own mother—finding fulfillment a convenient five days before she dies, sharpens his guilt; he longs even more for this impossible salvation. That anger propels the speaker through a long paraphrase of Book Nine, and, by the end of the poem, he at least understands what he can't change. And yet, recounting Augustine's recounting of the event, the narrator joins in, swinging out over the garden to "SCALE THE STARS," and go "past them, to that region of richness/unending, where God feeds/ISRAEL forever/ with the food of Truth . . ."

There's a reason this transformation can't be shown with a few quotes. Line by line Bidart is only rarely an interesting poet; like the *Cantos*, his poems work by accumulation, their virtuosity lying less in the turned phrase than in the dramatic pacing that drives the argument forward for extreme lengths (which may be why, with a few exceptions, his short poems seem inconclusive). By accumulation, staying with the *Confessions* for six straight pages, he shows he's been seduced by it. There's a half-real serenity to these passages—highlighted by the anguish around them—that is all the more poignant for being only half. The narrator isn't converted by the mystical vision; compared with events in his life, Augustine's account reads like a fairy tale. But Bidart finds the tale so stirring he effectively makes it his own; it's everything he wishes were true.

> He whom we *crave* to hear
> SPOKE AT LAST—;
> . . .
> . . . just as we two
> together reached forth and for one
> heartbeat attained to *TOUCH*
>
> the *WISDOM* that is our *SOURCE*
> and *GROUND*,—
> . . .
> . . . In words like these, but not
> exactly these, (Augustine then says,)
>
> they talked together that day—
>
> (just as the words I have given you
> are
> not, of course, exactly Augustine's).

Ironically, Bidart's refusal to accept wholeheartedly any one idea or ideal is his real saving grace. As he says at the close of his interview, if the earth opened and spoke, "she would espouse no one set of values, affections, meanings, that everything embraced would also somehow be annihilated and denied." "The First Hour of the Night," the poem that ends this collection a little too deliberately on an optimistic note, demonstrates the triumph of that skepticism. (The book's opening poems, not so coincidentally I think, also emphasize the positive.) The poet may never scale the stars with his mother, but he can find other, more workmanlike ways out of isolation and terror. Indeed, here, his never-ending critical attack; repeated, well-examined falls from innocence; and willingness to argue to extremes are what finally bring him peace.

It's impossible to quote from "The First Hour of the Night"; in structure as in content, this circular, immensely convoluted poem really is the culmination of Bidart's work to date. A dead man's monologue, it begins ghost-story fashion with a fireside talk, moves on to a " 'DREAM OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY' " prompted by a scene from Raphael hanging over his bed, and finishes with a dream about a horse that was the speaker's childhood pet. All of Bidart's habits and themes bob against one another in the flow: his lust for a unified philosophical ideal and his appreciation of its impossibility; his guilt over

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the past and his ability eventually to reconcile with it. Also, his annoying lectures and his delightful enthusiasms; his passion for ideas and his maddeningly disembodied narratives; his splendid passages and limping phrases; his power to move us and his efforts through the overused typography to control our every reaction. There is no one set way to view Bidart, who at midcareer (he was born in 1939) remains a completely original figure. That, again, is not faint praise. □

The Point Is to Change It

JANE CAPLAN

DESCENT INTO DISCOURSE: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History. *By Bryan D. Palmer. Temple University Press. 289 pp. $34.95. Paper $16.95.*

Bryan Palmer's hurt and anxious book addresses a significant local instance of a global problem: the crisis of Marxism as social theory and political practice. Palmer, a Canadian social historian, is deeply troubled by the current popularity of poststructuralist methods among some historians. After tracing the lineage of poststructuralist thought from Nietzsche to Derrida, Palmer reviews the state of radical social history in successive chapters that focus on the central themes of historical materialism, politics, class and gender. Attracted by the charms of language and "discourse," Palmer argues, a number of influential social historians have begun to abandon their discipline's older and truer vocation, which was to study the material social relations that structure the real world of power and exploitation. Palmer describes this retreat from the real as an "implosion of theory," a sterile inward-turning toward a bankrupt idealism in which aestheticism substitutes for politics, hedonism for hard work, jejune philosophy for concrete practice. "Critical theory," he asserts, "is no substitute for historical materialism; language is not life." Or, as Marx put it more famously in 1845, "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world . . . the point, however, is to *change* it."

Why and how, Palmer asks, have "social historians once committed to historical materialism . . . come to embrace theories and perspectives that often stand in opposition to a Marxist analysis of social relations and structures"? Why indeed? As one who has herself inched down this slippery slope with considerable hesitation and friction, I was curious to see how my autobiographical sense of change stands in a broader perspective. Though Palmer's subject is that minority of contemporary historians who are either Marxists or poststructuralists, the sources and implications of this paradigm shift reach well beyond history and the academy. The political and intellectual way stations on socialists' postwar path to radical doubt have been varied and numerous—1956, 1968, the new political and social movements of the 1970s (black power, feminism, the gay movement) *and* the "old" left's responses to these events. As a discernible contingent of the left in Western Europe and North America, activists as well as intellectuals, treks across to the kind of pluralist politics pilloried by Palmer, he is clearly entitled to ask whether this is a new *trahison des marxistes*, the latest in a repeated series of recusances that have so often plunged erstwhile socialists into rightward flight.

Palmer's answer is an interesting one. Following Russell Jacoby's recent diatribe, *The Last Intellectuals* [see Jacoby, "Radicals in Academia," September 19, 1987, and Casey Blake, "Prisoners of Tenure," October 31, 1987], Palmer argues that poststructuralist thought reflects the marginalization of a professional, university-based intellectual class. Ensconced largely in departments of philosophy and literary studies, they reinforce their subsidized confinement by withdrawing into the production of ever more idealist and esoteric texts, ticketed by the "designer labels" of the latest intellectual fashion, unread by any but their own narrow circles. This fluttering confraternity of mutual admirers would be negligible were it not for the inflated political claims they make, for the comfort they give to enemies on the political right and, not least, for their capacity to seduce working historians from their demanding but honest toil in the mines, fields and factories of the real.

It would be hard to contest Palmer's claim that the structure of the academic profession has a lot to do with the cur-

Jane Caplan is a professor of history at Bryn Mawr College.

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rent politics of knowledge. Equally, his warnings about the demobilizing political implications of some deconstructionist thought are, if not new, at least valuable reminders. Yet in evaluating recent intellectual movements I would give a more central place to the broader political processes to which he alludes but which do not finally structure his argument. Palmer worries that those ex- or post-Marxists who are drifting away from historical materialism's emphasis on social relations and economic determination have either lost their nerve in the face of recent political impasse and upheaval or are simply mesmerized by the dazzling intellectual thrills offered by postmodernism. Yet even as he rehearses much of the evidence for this, he does not seriously consider the third possibility: that this generation *is* in the grip of a fundamental shift of political and philosophical perspectives, the very "postmodernism" claimed by its proponents. If this is the case—and the very variety and complexity of the debates Palmer traces suggest that it is—then the responses of those who are rethinking their politics in the light of it cannot be dismissed as a collective apostasy but should be evaluated as an attempt to build a new kind of politics.

The stakes here are very high, and there's more than enough room for agonized doubts and arguments. It is probably more congenial to many intellectual temperaments to study such revolutions as past events than to have the burden of living through them: I find myself learning a new appreciation for the Chinese curse, "May you live in stirring times." Living in the socialist tradition now means facing a world of dissolved certainties, of fluid boundaries and seductive excesses; it means making arduous political choices and taking responsibility for them. It means working with a new component of political and philosophical doubt. First to weaken has been class as the privileged category of analysis, explanation and action. Many on the left have already accepted this shift, haltingly or not, as the politics of sex and race burrowed deeply under the walls of Marxist class theory. For them, class now stands alongside race and sex as trinitarian markers of collective identity, exploitation and difference. Inevitably, historical materialism as a theory of progressive change premised on class struggle has also been radically shaken. And perhaps most important is the advancing willingness to concede Marxism as a historically contingent ideology rather than an objective, scientific truth.

Palmer himself seems intermittently willing to countenance these moves, even as much of his text proceeds from an obtrusive conviction of certainty. It's not that this is an entirely ungenerous book: Palmer makes considerable efforts at fairness, and awards credit even as he criticizes. Yet his critical style also shifts awkwardly between polemical assault and uneasy retreat, between the usual vocabulary of reasonable exchange and exasperated epithets like "crap" and "refuse." This seems to me consistent with his ultimately unsatisfying debit/credit accountancy of the intellectual commerce he reviews. His book reads more like a balance sheet than a treatise: Characteristic works by successive historians are summarized, scrutinized for evidence of materialism or idealism and assigned to the "in" or "out" ledger. Despite Palmer's admirably broad reading and valuable critical summaries of historical texts by authors as varied as Hayden White, Edward P. Thompson, C.L.R. James, Joan Scott and Michael Kazin, the book does not coherently address the substantive issues that maintain this dualism. His textual strategy is not so much to advance a cumulative argument for his own belief in historical materialism but rather to repeatedly stake his position categorically, and then to salute or dismiss historians according to how they measure up to it. But when it comes down to it, I don't really care what color any particular author comes out in these repeated litmus tests. What I want to know are Palmer's *own* grounds for continued commitment to the metatheory of historical materialism. But because he never fully explains the political and epistemological legitimacy of historical materialism, we're left with something like a bowl of argumentary Cheerios—little crunchy circles with big holes in the middle.

What's disappointing about this book, then, is not that Palmer is critical of current trends in history and politics but that he doesn't seriously engage with their theoretical and epistemological sources. He persistently sidesteps these issues even in his concluding chapter, which is the most promising in terms of a substantive examination of his own theoretical premises. That he refuses, for example, to explain here why he regards the decline of class politics as a "retrogressive, indeed disastrous, process" is typical of his tendency to substitute assertion for argument. Here too he repeats his habitual ploy of summarizing a historian of whom he approves, rather than offering his own case for historical materialism against discourse theory. But how can readers possibly adjudicate between their relative merits if Palmer simply dismisses the latter because it is inconsistent with the former? By assuming that readers will share his knowledge of historical materialism, Palmer runs the risk that his book will reach no further than the limited circle of Marxist historians who also form its subject.

For Palmer the choice is clear and urgent: Marxist materialism and progressive politics, or postmodern idealism and the threat if not the certainty of reaction. Yet if we probe this dualism a little, we may find that it is both constraining and redundant, and that a reassessment might help to refine contemporary political options. I suggest that the choice between materialism and idealism is now neither as stark nor as simple as when it was argued by Marx against Feuerbach a century and a half ago, and as retold here by Palmer. Marx advanced his materialism in a culture defined by transcendental religious belief, and innocent of the scientific ideology that was to become hegemonic in his own lifetime. A hundred and fifty years later, this is not only a world where secular and religious ideologies coexist but also one in which "science" can be fetishized just as much as theology. The coherence and knowability of the material world by its observers is radically challenged by Einsteinian and Heisenbergian physics. Psychoanalytic method suggests that the relationship between body and mind is more like a river than a zipper: twin currents that create flux rather than closure. In all these ways, then, the primary Cartesian dualism itself has been opened to cultural and ideological challenge. Is it surprising that a political theory as tightly bound to dualist dialectics as Marxism should now be undergoing radical revision?

Meanwhile, the spread of literacy, the entangling web of communication, the sheer explosion in the sources and audiences of speech and representation have created a radically new ideological matrix of discourse. Of course, there are institutionalized relations of power within this, but the contents of these protean forms will not always be reducible to univocal meanings or coherent agencies. Structurally as well as ideologically, we may have to resist the recurrent fantasy

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of a knowledge that would be self-evident, and be more suspicious of the intellectual ecologist's call for the recovery of a crystalline clarity from the polluted waters of poststructuralist industry. Perhaps a politics of resistance may now be unable to stand on the firm ground of a guiding knowledge that provides the fixed matrix for solving political problems as they arise, but must work instead with whatever set of premises and possibilities forecloses least on the multiple claims that may be launched from other, perhaps unpredicted and uncontrolled positions. If this positionalism rules out an overarching point of reference and runs considerable risk of vacant pluralism, let us not forget that fixed points of reference have had a habit of categorically excluding those whose interests happened not to be articulated at the founding moment.

While I don't claim to know any better than Palmer where all this might take us, I have become less confident that even the revisionist historical materialism he espouses will be adequate to contemporary problems of historical interpretation and political change. Maybe he is more sanguine about the chances of releasing it from its receding origins as a scientific theory of progress. Yet Palmer's book itself embodies some of the uncertainty that marks poststructuralist thought, even as he rejects it. He switches between an aggressive vigor that reflects the optimistic heritage of Marxism and a wary, defensive uncertainty about its capacity to survive. "Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will," had been a famous injunction to socialists. Perhaps these days we need more intellectual skepticism than pessimism, and a little less optimism about what can be accomplished. □

Swing Time

MICHAEL WALDMAN

THE POLITICS OF RICH AND POOR: Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath. *By Kevin Phillips. Random House. 262 pp. $19.95.*

The startling concentration of wealth in the 1980s, argues conservative political analyst Kevin Phillips in *The Politics of Rich and Poor*, may ignite a populist prairie fire. The past decade has been a classic "capitalist heyday"—the sort of Republican free-market period that has historically been followed by a progressive backlash. The 1990s, he maintains, will be dominated by "money politics"—specifically, who's got it and who hasn't. For progressives, it's an alluring thesis, especially since it comes from the man who correctly forecast *The Emerging Republican Majority* in 1969.

Phillips summarizes the alternation throughout American history of Republican eras when the G.O.P.'s natural elitist tendencies spun into displays of ostentation, greed and economic downturn, and subsequent backlash from the left. But the 1980s were different and worse. Ronald Reagan's tax, regulatory, antitrust and monetary policies led to an astounding surge of concentrated wealth. "In 1979," Phillips writes, "CEOs made twenty-nine times the income of the average manufacturing worker. . . . By 1988, *Business Week* said the total compensation of the average CEO in its annual survey had risen to ninety-three times the earnings of the average factory worker." And while in 1982 there were thirteen billionaires, by 1988 there were fifty-one. "No parallel upsurge of riches had been seen since the late nineteenth century," he concludes.

The newly minted millionaires were drawn not from the ranks of manufacturers but from service industries, real estate and, most visibly, from the merger game on Wall Street. This parvenu explosion spawned the giddy upper-bracket excesses of the Roaring 80s. Phillips recounts some telling details, like the designation of new telephone area codes for the Atlantic and Pacific oceans because of all the new phone-equipped yachts. At the same time, the real income of average families stagnated, and young couples starting out faced the prospect of a standard of living visibly lower than that enjoyed by their parents.

Previous "capitalist blowouts," if brutal, were marked by entrepreneurial vigor. The robber barons built the railroads and the great manufacturing enterprises; Henry Ford created a new mode of manufacturing. But the recent wave of spec-

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ulative frenzy left the United States gravely weakened in the global economy.

Despite this confluence of economic torpor, international backsliding and simmering class resentment, a national mood shift is less inevitable than Phillips implies. History is full of examples. After all, the Gilded Age was followed not by President Bryan but by President McKinley. And many—including Phillips—believe that a realignment was in process after the election of 1968 but was temporarily halted by Watergate. Before liberals begin picking out their parking spaces at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, two formidable obstacles must be overcome: race and the Democratic Party.

The social issues that have split the Democratic coalition, especially race, may prove sturdier than economic self-interest. (After all, the first populist movement was destroyed by racism, at least in the South.) For twenty years the G.O.P. has been winning elections by persuading the middle class that its interests lie with the rich against the poor, rather than with the poor against the rich. And the fulcrum for that tilt has been race—from "law and order" as a response to urban riots in 1968 to Willie Horton. Phillips himself contributed to this effort. He first attained prominence during the 1968 election as the framer of Richard Nixon's "Southern strategy," an attempt to combine the resentments of rednecks and hardhats to forge a new Republican majority. That year, he told Garry Wills that the "secret" of politics is knowing who hates whom.

What really riled George Wallace supporters about limousine liberals was that they were giving "our" tax dollars to "them"—blacks and the poor. The very voters most primed for a backlash against mergermaniacs are also those most susceptible to coded racial appeals. All of which suggests once again that progressives do best when they frame their proposals—whether on health care, job training or taxes—as benefiting all citizens, regardless of race.

The other major problem for liberals is the Democratic Party. For years the party has forfeited even the most obvious pocketbook issues. Democrats who voted for the 1981 tax cuts, which David Stockman admitted were nothing more than traditional Republican "trickle-down" economics, will be hard pressed to lead the charge on tax fairness. And the Keating Five senators, all but one of them Democrats, cannot plausibly decry the consequences of deregulation in the savings and loan industry.

Even policy-makers who aren't personally tainted nonetheless shrink from aggressive advocacy. In 1988 Bush strategists dreaded a Democratic attack on the party of the rich, yet Michael Dukakis barred his speechwriters from attaching the pejorative label "country club" to Republicans. Similarly, when Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan proposed cutting the regressive payroll tax, which is quietly masking the budget deficit, conservatives blanched at the obvious political allure of such a class-based appeal. They needn't have worried; turf-conscious Democratic committee chairs and "responsible" Congressional party leaders snuffed the plan.

Democrats are now so heavily dependent on corporations and the wealthy for campaign contributions that they simply cannot speak for average citizens. Half of all House Democrats get the majority of their campaign funds from political action committees, most commonly those of corporations and trade groups. Representative Al Swift, who manages campaign finance reform for the House leadership, relies on PACs for 75 percent of his campaign money. And while Senate Democrats have put forward a laudable scheme to ban PAC gifts and provide nearly full public funding for Congressional races, House Democrats have balked at the proposal.

As a consequence, most core economic issues are beyond the realm of political debate. To be sure, it took courage to vote against a constitutional amendment prohibiting flag burning. But how many lawmakers have shown similar courage in standing up to the insurance industry or against wasteful leveraged buyouts? Perhaps only possible presidential candidates who have been absent from Washington, such as New York Governor Mario Cuomo or newly elected Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey, can take advantage of the new mood (both have recently spoken out about the S&L scandal). And it may be that a Democratic comeback will have to wait for a severe economic downturn. Phillips makes a persuasive case that, should this occur, principled progressives will have an opportunity to reshape the political landscape. □

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MUSIC.

GENE SANTORO

Fela Anikulapo Kuti and Jimmy Cliff on the Road

For the fans who packed the Ritz in New York City on June 29, it was a dream double bill: Jimmy Cliff and Fela Anikulapo Kuti. Cliff, up first, fronted his Oneness Band, a loose and lanky group with a whipsaw guitarist and a fistful of wicked grooves. Though he showcased tunes from his new (and uneven) album, *Images* (Cliff Sounds and Films; available through Vision Records, 13385 West Dixie Highway, North Miami, FL 33161), he also reached back for hits that warmed the crowd and illustrated reggae history.

Like virtually all the Rasta musicians who started out thirty years ago, Cliff began by copying U.S. r&b sounds. During the ska craze of the early 1960s he became one of the first Jamaicans to have an album released in Britain. In 1971—when Bob Marley was still almost completely unknown outside Jamaica—Cliff, already internationally famous from touring, starred in *The Harder They Come*. Based on the adventures of real-life cop killer Vincent Martin, who finally died in an Old West–style gun battle with Jamaican police, the movie cast Cliff as a rude-boy reggae singer who, unable to break into the music biz, turns to the ganja trade and kills a cop. Rapidly becoming a worldwide cult favorite, its political allegory put Cliff—and reggae—on the international map.

Even though he, like virtually all other reggae singers, was eclipsed by Marley, Cliff has cut a number of classic tunes in the past twenty-five years: "Sitting Here in Limbo," "Struggling Man," "You Can Get It if You Really Want," "Many Rivers to Cross," "Wonderful World, Beautiful People." His voice, high and thin and quavery compared with those of peers like Marley, Peter Tosh, Bunny Wailer and Toots Hibbert, soars and stretches with an appealing waiflike quality over his characteristically busy arrangements. Onstage at the Ritz, he had an easy rapport with the crowd on hard-line political tunes like "Pressure" (which urges continuing economic sanctions against South Africa) as well as on gentler ballads like "Rebel in Me."

There is nothing gentle in Fela Ani-

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kulapo Kuti. Serious and focused, Fela is a peculiar late-twentieth-century mix of shaman, politician, ombudsman, activist and musical genius. His concerts are lengthy, irresistible groove-alongs—outside of the Meters and certain of James Brown's backing bands, Fela's Egypt 80 (formerly Afrika 70) probably packs the world's most terrifying collection of beats and the blariest foghorn sax section since the bands that produced New Orleans classics like "Sea Cruise." His songs, which usually ride sloganlike lyrics over a densely woven web of cross-rhythms, have titles like "Beasts of No Nation" (which deals with the way various governments abet South African repression) and "Just Like That" (a sneeringly witty list of Nigeria's current shortcomings).

Fela calls his music "Afro-beat," and its stacked syncopations are as clearly African as his idol (and inspiration) James Brown's mid- and late-1960s funk; after seeing Sierra Leonean Geraldo Pino, a James Brown imitator, in 1966, Fela abandoned Nigerian highlife for U.S. soul-based sounds. (Pino, born Gerald Pine, changed his name when he began playing rumba-influenced pop in the early 1960s. A few years later, his band, the Heartbeats, started to imitate the soul music they'd heard in Liberia, and successfully toured it through Ghana and Nigeria, sowing the seeds for the Afro-pop of the next two generations.) Fela himself spent 1969 in the United States, where he learned more about soul music and discovered the writings of Malcolm X. "I wanted to *be* Malcolm X," he told Carlos Moore, author of *Fela Fela*.

Fela's politics can sometimes mess up the flow of his performances: When the spirit moves him, he has been known to deliver long-winded lectures on the International Monetary Fund's manipulation of African currencies, on pan-Africanism, and so on. He's a bit like Sun Ra, except that Fela actually knows what he's talking about. He's both done his homework and spent time under arrest (for alleged currency smuggling) by the Nigerian government, which considers him a political threat. (He still wants to be president.)

His recent releases, *Beasts of No Nation* and *Overtake Done Overtake Overtake* (both Shanachie), illustrate Fela's musical ways. Starting from a rolling mid-tempo, his twenty-odd-piece band layers shifting, cross-talking accents that build to a release—there's no verse-chorus-bridge structure in Fela's Afro-beat. While several of his wives shimmy and

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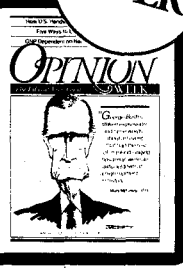

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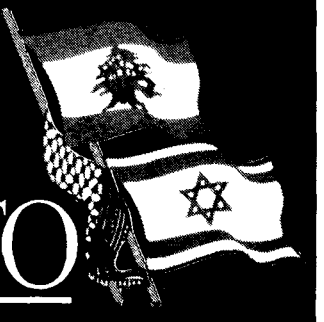

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sing, he slices through the weave with his charismatic croak. On the dance floor, the music's sheer percolating relentlessness—half an hour or so per tune—sucks you in. Everybody moves. □

FILMS.

STUART KLAWANS

The Big Dis
Metropolitan
Ariel
Mo' Better Blues

Another 48 Hrs. felt like it. Schwarzenegger went to Mars. ("He should only be happy," my mother said.) Tom Cruise drove around very fast. And Bruce Willis killed some more people. That's it, since the last time I checked in with you—except, of course, for *Dick Tracy*, the review of which fell victim to *The Nation*'s summer schedule. (In brief: The marketing campaign for *Dick Tracy* is overbearing, but the film is not. It's light, witty, genial and great to look at—a Hollywood throwback, not so much to the gangster pictures and serials as to wonderful old nonsense such as *Love Me Tonight*.) Have I left anything out? Yes—*Back to the Future Part III*, which deserves an honorable mention because of its love story. Mary Steenburgen and Christopher Lloyd play a couple of adults who fall for each other out of mutual esteem and shared interests in their reading. Talk about weird plot developments.

But now the fever season has passed and we have a few movies worth discussing, some of which cost less than the budget for Arnold's Ben-Gay on *Total Recall*. The basic requirements of *The Big Dis*, for example, were a shooting budget of $8,500 and a lot of dedication and talent from three young filmmakers: Gordon Eriksen, Heather Johnston and John O'Brien.

Filmed entirely in racially integrated Long Island suburbs—"It's a South Shore picture," says Eriksen—*The Big Dis* follows a black soldier named J.D. (James Haig) as he returns home on a weekend pass and pursues the one thing on his mind. "What's wrong with all these guys today?" chants a female chorus of rappers on the soundtrack, as we see J.D. arriving at Kennedy Airport. The response, delivered by a male chorus: "We wanna get laid, yes yes yes yes, we wanna get laid."

For the next seventy-two hours, J.D. tries nonstop to get laid but winds up, as he puts it, "dissed and dismissed." The problem is not his looks. Though not handsome—his most prominent feature, a bottle-opener of a nose, turns into a subject for dissing in its own right—J.D. has the sort of open, ingenuous face that invites love from all but the glamour-stricken. Unfortunately, though, the Army seems to have taught him only one tactic, the frontal assault. The first young woman to go out with him quickly finds herself, to her dismay, at J.D.'s idea of a suitable venue for seduction. "Jay-ames!" she complains. "This is the *gas* station." By the following afternoon, he's sunk to interrogating 13-year-olds on a front lawn, asking whether their older brothers' girlfriends have any sisters.

Shot with a hand-held, 16mm camera in black and white, *The Big Dis* has an improvisational character and a look of *cinéma vérité*. The scenes don't exactly meander, but they do unfold at an unforced pace. Humor develops as it will; and a morning-after confrontation between J.D. and two of his intended conquests goes on long enough to feel appropriately brutal. There's also plenty of footage documenting suburban America's primary activity, driving around. Whatever sense of urgency the film conveys—and there ought to be some, since J.D. has only a few hours in which to satisfy his need—arises mostly from the combination of rap and heavy-metal music on the soundtrack, providing narration, commentary and catharsis all at once.

Although *The Big Dis* already has established a reputation for Eriksen, Johnston and O'Brien, it might be a bit too casual in approach to become their breakout picture. I would have preferred less of the organizing intelligence on the soundtrack and more of it on the screen, both in terms of scene structure and photography. (O'Brien, as camera operator, was somewhat too fond of zooms and swishes.) But that's it for the bad news. The good news is that these filmmakers are young, fresh, smart and gutsy. I'm already looking forward to their next picture.

Oddly enough, I'm not looking forward to Whit Stillman's, even though I thoroughly enjoyed his comedy of manners, *Metropolitan*. Perhaps that's because *Metropolitan* is so satisfying that nothing more could be wanted; or perhaps because Stillman, like the best of his characters, seems fated always to have the air of the dilettante, dabbling brilliantly at whatever interests him but never, because of his social class, settling into anything so terminal as a career.

Set at Christmastime in a Manhattan of the recent past, *Metropolitan* focuses on eight college-age members of the upper class—debutantes and their escorts—during a season of society balls. It's a subject that I expected would bring out the Jacobin in me. But then, a few minutes into the picture, I heard one of the characters describe himself as a Fourierist, which not only undercut my political reactions but announced that something sly and funny was starting to transpire.

Tom (Ed Clemons), the quietly solemn Fourierist, has fallen by accident into this rich kids' clique. Although he's prep-school educated and has friend-of-a-friend status, Tom lives on the West Side (which might as well be Tangier to these kids) and has to fake a preference for travel by bus, lacking the money for cab fare. No matter. It seems that Audrey (Carolyn Farina), the shy, bookish member of the clique, needs a regular escort; and so Nick (Chris Eigeman) presses Tom into service. Cynical and glib but also unexpectedly kind, Nick immediately sees through Tom's show of diffidence, welcoming him to the group by phrasing an invitation to a party as if it were a call to duty. "The girls are vulnerable," Nick explains, then clinches the argument with, "Thorstein Veblen would want you to go."

Although it was filmed on a budget scarcely larger than that of *The Big Dis*, *Metropolitan* looks (fittingly enough) like a much more lavish production. That's partly because of the Fifth Avenue locations: apartments, ballrooms and the occasional church. But it's also because Stillman relies mostly on a conventional system of master shots intercut with close-ups and two-shots. What this method lacks in dynamism it makes up for with tact, allowing Stillman to pull off the wonderful trick of *Metropolitan*—establishing just the right distance from the characters and then maintaining it throughout the film. Like Tom, the not-quite-insider, we feel distant enough to gape at these cha-cha-loving Episcopalians; but we're close enough to feel sympathy with them too. In speech and manner they seem older than their years, as if they were playing dress-up; and yet they're going through late-adolescent courtships in as much confusion as J.D.

Stillman is not entirely evenhanded in his sympathies; he seems to judge the women (except for Audrey) a bit more harshly than the men. None of the women are as bad as the film's chief cad, Rick Von Sloneker (Will Kempe), but

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none are as complex as Nick. The latter, sad to say, disappears about three-quarters of the way through the film, walking down a platform at Grand Central Station while the soundtrack plays "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." It's a perfect exit for the perfect gentleman; but after that *Metropolitan*, though still delightful, is never quite the same.

Aki Kaurismäki, who wrote and directed *Ariel*, is part of an international school of ironists whose best-known member is perhaps Wim Wenders—not the Wenders of *Wings of Desire* but of *The American Friend* and the first two-thirds of *Paris, Texas*. Like the directors of the French New Wave, these filmmakers love the old American B movies, but they express their admiration in a far less jazzy style. Instead of taking up the excitement and moral chiaroscuro of the B movies, they focus on the sense of loneliness and flatness. Even if they're shooting (as with *Ariel*) in the middle of Helsinki, they seem to want to record the endless blankness of the American landscape. When Stillman uses conventional Hollywood setups and editing in *Metropolitan*, the effect is craftsmanlike, unobtrusive, decorous. When Kaurismäki employs such conventions, they make the action proceed as if under a deadpan stare.

Ariel begins with just such a laconic observation of events. Two men are sitting in a diner in Lapland; the mine where they worked has just shut down. The elder makes a bitter speech, warning his companion not to wind up like him, then walks off to the toilet. The companion doesn't move; the camera doesn't move. After a while, you hear the shot. The younger man—played by Turo Pajala, who looks a bit like a Finnish Tim Robbins—picks himself up without much changing his glum expression and goes off in a white Cadillac convertible. The garage collapses as he drives away.

Things go from bad to much worse for the young man as soon as he gets to Helsinki. But then he acquires a partner in hard times: Irmeli (Susanna Haavisto), a meter maid who quits her job on the spot rather than give him a parking ticket. What follows is a series of nearly random reversals of fortune, almost without cause and effect, leading the characters through a men's shelter, the docks, jail and a warehouse full of criminals.

A hero belongs to the ironic mode, Northrop Frye has written, if he or she is "inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves, so that we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration, or absurdity." Just so in *Ariel*. But as Frye also observed, irony may sometimes shade into the solemnity of myth. By the end of *Ariel*, the odd little family made up by Irmeli and the miner is bent on escape—escape, it seems, from everything cruel and arbitrary. The camera still stares at them, deadpan. If anything, the events are funnier than before. But we're no longer looking down on the characters, not when they seem to be carrying the hopes of everyone who's ever been stepped on.

You might see Aki Kaurismäki compared to any number of filmmakers, from Fassbinder to Jarmusch. Fine, so long as he's being flattered and you're being drawn toward the theater. I'll even let my comparison to Wenders stand, if it helps the box office. But make no mistake: *Ariel* is an original, and so is its director.

Mo' Better Blues carries a double burden for Spike Lee. First, it's a film about the jazz world, in which he grew up. (He's the son of bassist and composer Bill Lee.) Second, it's his return to a theme he addressed in *She's Gotta Have It*, back when he was a slack-receiving prodigy straight out of film school. Once more, Lee has taken a look at male-female relationships.

Let us try to go beyond the obvious. The female characters in *Mo' Better Blues* are hardly even shadows of the males. (Cries of incredulity; roars of denial.) The story has trumpeter Bleek Gilliam (Denzel Washington) carrying on simultaneous affairs with the serious Indigo (Joie Lee) and the glamorous Clarke (Cynda Williams). He refuses to choose between them, his major character flaw—ask anybody on screen—being self-absorption. But then, there's not much to choose. We know Indigo is a good woman, because she's played by Spike Lee's sister. We know Clarke is, if not bad, then undependable, because she's a pain in the ass to Bleek. And that's really all we get to know about them, because Lee is much more interested in Bleek's relationships with men: his father (Dick Anthony Williams), his rival as band leader and lover (Wesley Snipes) and his oldest friend and manager, Giant (Lee himself).

There have been plenty of effective dramas—half of them by David Mamet—in which the men paid much more attention to one another than to women. You might even say that women—insubstan-

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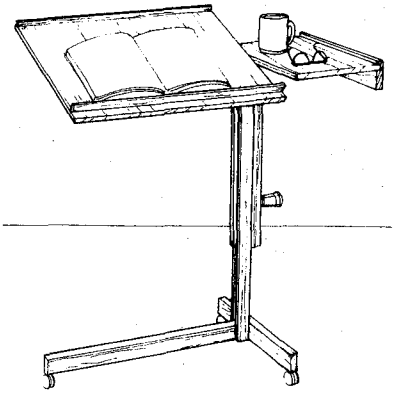

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tial agents of desire or pain or sometimes salvation, who materialize and vanish as if by whim—are really just conduits for the men. They help friends stay in touch with each other. Certainly that's the case in *Mo' Better Blues*, in which Bleek and tenorman Shadow Henderson have Clarke's body in common. There's also a suggestion that Giant—who seems celibate but watches Bleek operate with women—is a little too close to his friend. In the barrage of jocular insults that composes much of the film's dialogue, someone goes so far as to say that Giant is Bleek's "bitch."

The moral of the film, if any, is that Bleek and Giant should not be ashamed to be so close. Lee is telling black men that they should stick together—which is fine with me, except for the film's being a muddle, and a boring one at that.

In only two sequences has Lee shown his characteristic vigor. The first is a montage of Bleek making love to Indigo and Clarke, with Coltrane on the soundtrack. The second is a scene of Giant being beaten in an alley by a couple of thugs, while Bleek plays on the bandstand. (The music for Bleek's quintet is supplied by Branford Marsalis, with Terence Blanchard sitting in on trumpet.) Except for those sequences, the movie dawdles through its scenes, wandering off in various directions as if forgetting not only its aim but its identity, while Lee's camera fidgets, substituting mannerisms for energy and purpose.

Mo' Better Blues features wonderful performances, both from individuals (notably Washington) and from what has come to be Lee's stock company (including Giancarlo Esposito and Bill Nunn). You rarely see such lively interplay. The gorgeous cinematography is again by Ernest Dickerson. The all-jazz soundtrack lets you listen to some of the best music of this century.

And yet I suspect Lee feels as ambivalent about jazz as he does about the women, who are the other ostensible focus of the film. Toward the end, Bleek gets his comeuppance for selfishness by losing both his band and Clarke to Shadow, who makes a big hit playing "what people want to hear." Unfortunately, it's hard to take this moral seriously, when Bleek is the one who's played all the good music in the film. Shadow's band plays pop jazz—you hear them perform something called a blues, but it's more like a dirge, of the sort that would embarrass even Kenny G. If this is what it means to reach out to people, then who wants to? □

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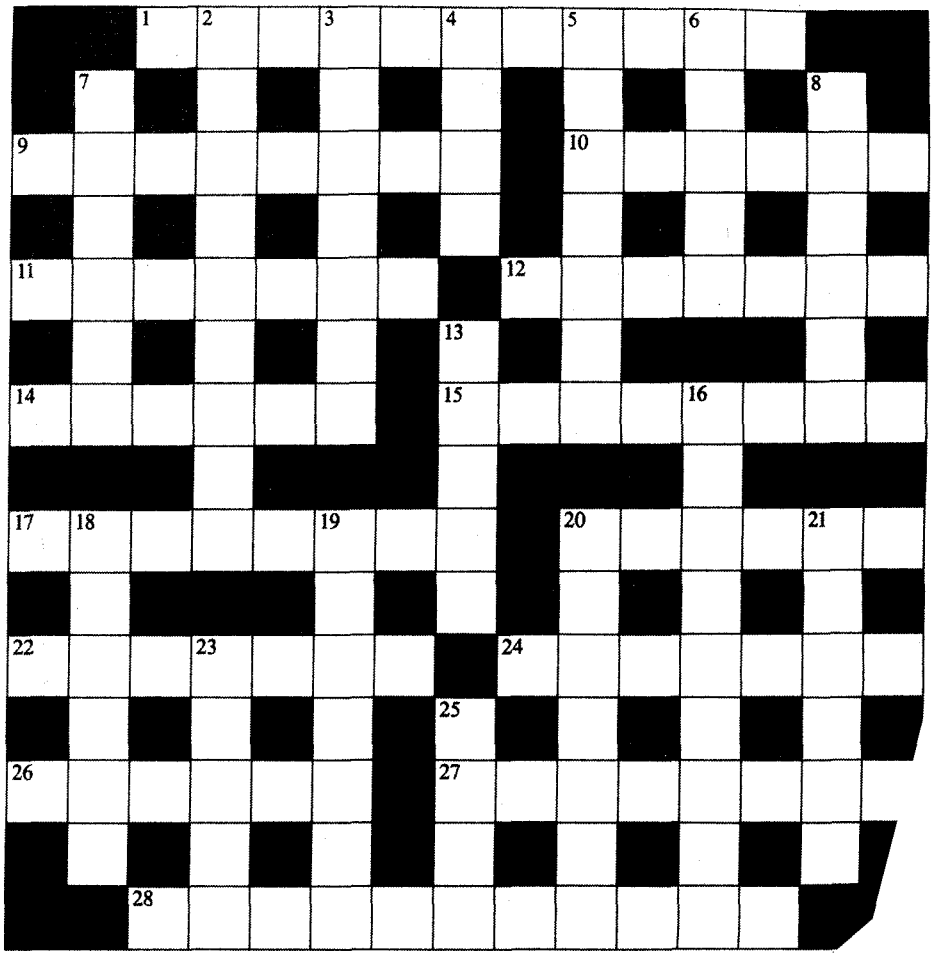
SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2299

T	U	R	N	D	O	W	N	■	T	H	E	B	E	D
U	■	E	■	O	■	H	■	O	■	A	■	U	■	I
R	I	G	H	T	■	A	B	D	U	C	T	I	O	N
B	■	I	■	S	■	L	■	E	■	K	■	L	■	N
A	S	S	U	A	G	E	■	S	W	I	N	D	L	E
N	■	T	■	N	■	R	■	S	■	N	■	■	■	R
■	G	E	O	D	E	S	■	A	L	G	E	B	R	A
S	■	R	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	E	■	T
A	U	S	T	E	R	E	■	D	A	S	H	E	S	■
L	■	■	■	V	■	G	■	R	■	U	■	T	■	M
E	C	H	O	I	N	G	■	A	M	N	E	S	I	A
S	■	A	■	L	■	N	■	W	■	B	■	U	■	S
M	O	R	S	E	C	O	D	E	■	E	I	G	H	T
A	■	E	■	Y	■	G	■	R	■	L	■	A	■	I
N	U	M	B	E	R	■	E	S	O	T	E	R	I	C

The Nation.

Crossword Puzzle No. 2300

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Suggests 8 and 27 in which shop owners are regularly engaged. (5-6)
9 Even the poetic form tended around it but it's turned over as a matter of maintenance. (8)
10 The old country, for some Arabs especially for one in the navy who may write a lot. (6)
11 What they might have done before they used feathers around one? Hung about, naturally! (7)
12 Reputedly the trees block one's view of these. (7)
14 and 15 Dirty soles if one has to come down safely. (4,2,4,4)
17 See 16 down
20 Hang? (Rather, ending up with a brok... (6)
22 Study what you have to fill out ... with it. (7)
24 Not a regular TV productio... is different. (7)
26 I somehow get in one tha... put something down. (6)
27 See 8 down
28 Write your ABC's and you mig... the junk mail. (4,7)

DOWN

2 and 23 Place associated with fire? (Horn... by—well-known for being really wild!) (6,3,
3 Some minor anxiety connected with the company? (7)
4 Is Fundy supposed to be very neat? (4)
5 Turner should fit in here, if an ... pected. (7)
6 Nothing in the front part ... be used for hanging. (...
7 Plot with a system ...
8 and 27 across St... sound the fin... could have...
13 See 25
16 and ... s...

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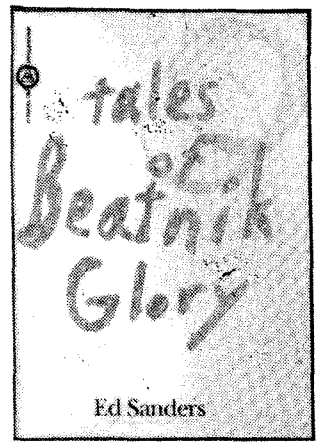

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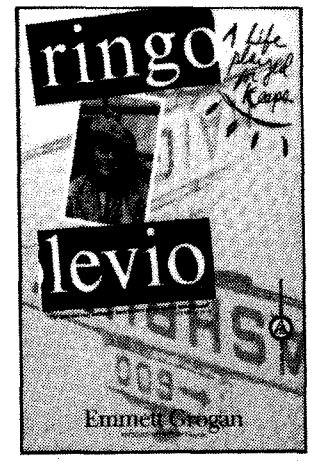

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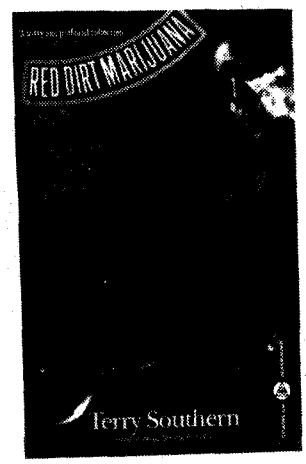

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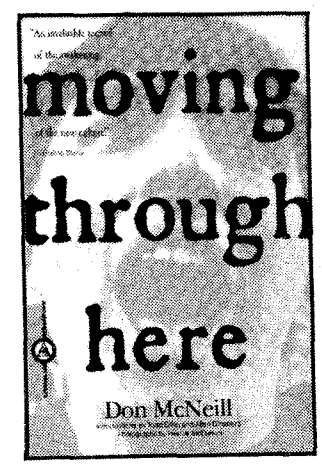

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